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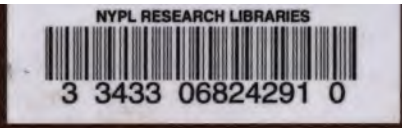
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THE

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS

MISCELLANY;

OR,

SIXTY-ONE

APHORETICAL ESSAYS,

ON SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES AND VIRTUES.

By *HUGH KNOX*, D. D.
IN ST. CROIX.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOLUME SECOND.

——— hæc ego mecum
Compressis agito labris, ubi quid datur otii
Illudo chartis. HOR.

Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. HOR. A. P.

Scribentem juvat ipse favor, minuitque laborem,
Cumque suo crescens pectore fervet opus. OVID.

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ESSAY XXXV.

CHRISTIAN COURAGE *or* FORTITUDE, *and its opposites.*

1. FORTITUDE or courage, is that temper or diſpoſition of mind which ſets a man upon doing *brave* and *commendable* actions in the face of any *danger* or *oppoſition* which may lie in his way. Nay, the truly brave man is rather *animated* than *diſheartened*, by the number or greatneſs of the dangers and difficulties which lie in the way of his duty. "The righteous is bold "as a lion; and he that hath clean hands "grows ſtronger and ſtronger."

2. Chriſtian courage or fortitude, is a being *bold, fearleſs* and *intrepid* in the cauſe of Chriſt, and in our duty and allegiance to him. As bravery in war has been ever eſteemed the higheſt proof of courage, (becauſe *life*, the deareſt of all earthly enjoyments, is riſked in war) ſo we borrow our idea of chriſtian courage, from the ſtate of chriſtianity in this world, which is very properly repreſented as a ſtate of warfare; —and to exerciſe chriſtian courage, is but another *phraſe* for 'being good ſoldiers of

Jesus Christ,' who is called very expreſſively the *Captain of our ſalvation*.*

3. Courage naturally ſuppoſes difficulties, dangers and oppoſition; for, without theſe, there could be no proper trial or exerciſe of this virtue. This therefore proves, that the chriſtian life, as a ſtate of warfare, is not that eaſy, inactive, indolent thing, which the generality of nominal profeſſors ſeem to imagine; but a life of conflict, full of hazards, difficulties and oppoſition; and that he who has never experienced and encountered theſe, has never yet truly enliſted himſelf under the banner of Jeſus, nor warred a good warfare.

4. Courage, in order to denominate it a *chriſtian virtue*, muſt, as well as *zeal*, be founded upon *knowledge*, and a rational conviction, not only of the goodneſs of the cauſe in which we are engaged, but alſo of the difficulties we have to encounter; the riſk we run; the meaſure of our ſtrength; the aids and ſuccors we have to expect, and the wages we have to receive if we come off conquerors. In ſhort, it ſuppoſes that we have *counted the coſt*.†

5. The neceſſity and expediency of chriſtian fortitude will appear from the *numerous*, *ſubtile* and *powerful* enemies of our ſalvation: (1.) From inviſible, malignant

* 2 Tim. ii. 3.
† *Luke xiv. 26.—33.* Phil. iii. 7.—14. Acts xx. 22.—24. *Rom. viii.* 18. 2 Cor. iv. 16.

ſpirits.* (2.) From our own luſts and corruptions, which treacherouſly take part with theſe ſpiritual enemies againſt us, and being, as it were, our very ſelves, are the more difficult to deny, mortify and conquer. (3.) From our fellow creatures, who too often uſe every artifice to allure us to ſin, or to ſhame and fright us from duty.

6. The *nature* and *number* of our chriſtian duties abſolutely require the exerciſe of this virtue. What fortitude muſt it require to comply with that exhortation of our Lord, "If any man will be my diſciple, "let him deny himſelf and take up his croſs "and follow me?" *Self-denial*, and *self-conquest* are the nobleſt feats of courage, and require the exertions of a firm, reſolute and determined ſoul. "He that "is ſlow to anger is better than the mighty; "and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that "taketh a city."‡ To be more particular: (1.) Repentance, which is a general and indiſpenſible chriſtian duty, requires the utmoſt degree of fortitude and reſolution to ſubdue and eradicate old rooted habits, and to deny ourſelves ſuch things as we have long had great pleaſure in, and to abſtain from which, will be extremely painful. We muſt forſake old companions; reſolutely withſtand their enticements to ſin

* Eph. vi. 8, &c.

‡ Prov. xvi. 32.

and vanity, endure their ſcoffs, and, at length, their rage. It may happen, that we cannot truly repent without diſobliging our neareſt relations and deareſt friends; without diſcontinuing *gainful business*, as well as renouncing *beloved lusts*; or without making acknowledgments for injuries done, and reſtoring, with ſhame, what we have unjuſtly acquired. But under all theſe difficult and ſelf-denying duties, the cowardly and irreſolute man muſt ſhamefully ſuccumb.

2. The falſe opinions and depraved cuſtoms of the world make ſad havoc among human ſouls, and is the duty of every chriſtian to oppoſe them, and to counteract their miſchievous tendency. The evangelical precept is, "Be not conformed to this "world; but be ye transformed by the "renewing of your minds." Now, the falſe maxims and depraved cuſtoms of the world, like irreſiſtible torrents, ſweep the cowardly and irreſolute chriſtian along with them. He hears his religious opinions ridiculed; his GOD irreverently mentioned; his Saviour traduced, and his pious friends made the laughing ſtock of fools, yet dares not reply; fears to be rude; dreads the ridicule or reſentment of ſome fellow-worm —nay, perhaps the ſame puſillanimity leads him baſely to lend the ſmile of ſeeming approbation to this wickedneſs, and at length cordially to fall into it himſelf. But the

reſolute and courageous chriſtian, dares to be ſingularly good; he dares to ſtem the torrent of popular depravity and corruption;—he dares to be pious and upright, againſt the example of *the multitude who do iniquity*.—He can bear to be laughed at as an unfaſhionable fool, by both the great and little vulgar, with all the fortitude and magnanimity of a chriſtian hero. He ſhines as a light in the world, amidſt a crooked and perverſe generation, holding forth the word of life, and counting it all joy to be perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake. Were the whole world to deride, to perſecute, to oppoſe him, he would, with the heroic leader of Iſrael's tribes, reſolve, "As for me "and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord."*

(3.) To be brief: Would we ſee the excellency and neceſſity of chriſtian fortitude, we muſt view the chriſtian in the following ſtations of duty and of providence —reproving ſin—oppoſing error—propagating truth—conflicting with temptation —ſtruggling under the preſſure of pain and heavy calamities and afflictions—expoſed to the rage and malignity of perſecuting zeal—and upon the very verge of eternity, encountering *death*, the *laſt* and *moſt terrific* enemy in the chriſtian warfare:—Eſpecially, in the awful hour of death, and amidſt the agonies of diſſolving nature, the

* Job xxiv. 15.

irreſolute man is ſtupified with horror. He dares not take a retroſpect of his by-paſt life, nor look into the fathomleſs abyſs of eternity. He recollects, that the face of man has often terrified him ſo, as to make him do violence to conſcience: How then ſhall he behold the face of GOD, whom he hath offended through a ſinful fear of man, and of whoſe words he has been aſhamed before an *adulterous generation*? *Fearful* he clings to life; *reluctant* he ſtarts back from the brink of eternity, and dreads the ſight of his almighty judge. Diſmal forbodings fill his ſoul with diſtreſsful agonies, and he quits the world, leaving the ſpectators under a painful uncertainty whither he is gone.—But the chriſtian who has courageouſly ſerved his GOD in life, is generally bold as a lion in the near proſpect of death. To him, death is a meſſenger of peace. He triumphs over his terrors through the blood of the Lamb; enquires fearleſs for his ſting, and demands his guidance to the unknown regions of eternity! *There* he expects congratulating angels to meet him. *There* he hopes to ſee GOD as his reconciled Father, face to face, and that wonderful God-man Chriſt Jeſus, who was ſo much his friend as to die for him;—to ſee him exalted to the higheſt honors,—exalted to be his judge:—And recollecting ſome of the tokens and manifeſtations of

his love, he desires now to testify to all around him, the *grace*, and *faithfulness* and *loving kindness* of his Lord. He dies in hope; dies exulting; moves and instructs the spectators of his exit, and perhaps does more honor to GOD, and more good to his fellow-men, in his death, than he has been enabled to do in all his life.

7. Faith begets this virtue in the soul, and gives vigor to all its acts and exertions. (1.) By that faith, which is the evidence of things not seen, we perceive, that the cause we have espoused is good; that it is the cause of GOD and of Christ; the cause in which the eternal interest of our souls is embarked. (2.) By faith we see the arm of omnipotence stretched out for our succor, and may see, with humble confidence, that we have *almighty strength*, respecting what we have to encounter with in the way of our duty. How base then to be *dastardly* and *faint-hearted*, with such odds on our side? (3.) By the eye of faith we see the glorious captain of our salvation spreading his standard over us—standing with a celestial crown in his hand to reward our valor, and millions of our fellow soldiers, beholding, as it were, from the battlements of heaven, our behavior in the christian race and warfare. Seeing then we are encompassed with such a cloud of witnesses, ought we not, "Laying aside every

"weight, and the ſin which eaſily beſets "us, to run with patience the race ſet be- "fore us, looking unto Jeſus?"* (4.) By faith we look back and behold the gracious army of *martyrs*, *apoſtles*, *prophets*, and *patriarchs*, who were bold to attempt, and reſolute to perform the moſt arduous things. *These* have each conquered ſingly, and triumphed. *These* were *men* as *we are*, and juſtly expect that we ſhould behave with equal ardor, fortitude and perſeverance in the chriſtian warfare. They ſeem to chide our ſloth, and animate us to activity by obſerving, that 'GOD is ſtill almighty;—that 'our religion is ſtill divine;—that our Re- 'deemer is ſtill the ſame Jeſus, and his 'goſpel worthy as much honor now as ever 'it has been.'

ESSAY XXXVI.

The CHRISTIAN USES *of the* TONGUE.

1. THE nobleſt uſe that can be made of the tongue, is to *glorify* GOD; which is done by this little inſtrument, (1.) By praying to him. Thus we acknowledge our entire dependence on him for all that is needful to our happineſs. (2.) By praiſing him. Thus we make known his loving kindneſs to his needy undeſerving crea-

* 1 Cor ix. 25. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Heb. xii. 1,—4.

tures. (3.) By expreſſing our admiration of his infinite perfections: Thus exalting his great name. (4.) By confeſſing our iniquities: Thus magnifying his grace, which continues with us, notwithſtanding our ſo great unworthineſs. (5.) By contending for the truth of his word; teſtifying our confidence in it, and diſcouraging every indecent freedom with it. (6.) By vindicating his providential government, and diſplaying the wiſdom, goodneſs and equity of his ways. Theſe are, doubtleſs, ſome of the principal ends for which the tongue is given to man.

2. A very good and noble uſe of the tongue is, to promote by it the good of our neighbor; which we may do, (1.) By laboring to inſtruct the ignorant in what may relate to the concerns of his body; but more eſpecially in what reſpects his ſoul. (2.) By commendation, in ſuch manner as may be an encouragement to him to proceed in the way of godlineſs and virtue, ſo as to advance his good name, and extend the ſphere of his uſefulneſs: But in this good office, we ſhould guard in a particular manner againſt flattery, or imprudent commendation, which is deadly poiſon to moſt men. (4.) By *peace-making*: There being nothing more deſtructive to religion and virtue than malicious ſtrife; nor any thing more unſeemly in a chriſtian. Thoſe there-

fore who are the happy inſtruments of removing this helliſh evil from between men, are, in a peculiar manner, conſidered by the GOD of peace as *his children:* And, (5.) By vindicating injured characters and perſons. This is doing very great ſervice to men; diſcovers a noble ſpirit, and is an office that procures the eſteem of men, and GOD doubtleſs regards the diſcharge of it with complacence.* (6.) One of the nobleſt and moſt benevolent uſes of the tongue, towards our fellow creatures, after inſtructing them in the principles of religion, and animating them to the practice of it; is to pour the balm of conſolation into the wounded ſpirit. Words fitly ſpoken to the broken in heart; to thoſe agonizing ſouls who are ſinking as it were, under the preſſure of ſome heavy affliction into the black ſea of deſpair, are indeed like *apples of gold in pictures of ſilver.* Can there be a more *God-like, chriſtian-like* office than to ſooth the throbbings of the anxious mind; to give it "beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for "mourning, and the garment of praiſe for "the ſpirit of heavineſs?" This is one of the moſt amiable and benevolent offices of the gracious Redeemer, "To bind up the "broken hearted and to comfort all that "mourn."† And ſuch as imitate him in

* Matth. xii. 35,—37.
† Iſa. lxi. 1,—3.

this branch of his prophetic office, are, to their ſorrowing diſtreſſed fellow creatures, as *rivers of water in a dry place*, and the *ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land*: They are *a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtress, a refuge from the ſtorm, and a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible ones is a ſtorm againſt the wall.**

3. Another chriſtian uſe of the tongue, is to manage it ſo as not to *deſtroy*, but to *increaſe*, mutual confidence among men. This muſt be done by maintaining a ſtrict correſpondence between *our words* and *our thoughts*. Whenever we ſpeak, an honeſt upright heart ſhould dictate our ſpeech, and we ſhould on no pretence, tell a lie, not even that good may come.† Great regard ſhould be paid in particular to our promiſes; to promiſe nothing or enter into no engagements but ſuch as we are deliberately reſolved to perform at all hazards.—In ſhort, our words ſhould contain nothing but truth, and the whole truth, reſerving nothing, where the reſerve would amount to the conſequence of a lie in prejudicing any. Yet in ſome caſes it may be lawful to reſerve *a part of the truth*.—or to uſe ſomething of a feint. See 1 Sam xvi. 2.

* Iſa. xxxii. 2.——xxv. 4.

† Rom. iii. 8, Pſal. xv. 1, 2.

ESSAY XXXVII.

The UNCHRISTIAN ABUSES *of the* TONGUE.

THE unchriſtian abuſes of the tongue, form a ſtrong contraſt to the former ſubject.

1. As the nobleſt uſe of the tongue, conſiſts in thoſe exerciſes of it which tend to celebrate, magnify and glorify the bleſſed GOD, and ſet forth his excellencies to our fellow-creatures; ſo whatever has a direct or indirect tendency to diſhonor GOD, or give our fellow creatures, *wrong*, *mean* and *unworthy* apprehenſions of him, are the moſt *capital ſins* and *abuſes* of the tongue —ſuch as, (1.) atheiſtical ſpeeches: As ſaying, that *there is no* GOD; denying or diſputing his being, or inſinuating ſuch hints and arguments, as tend to deſtroy this belief in ourſelves or fellow creatures. This is ſtriking at the glory of GOD with a witneſs, and eraſing the very foundations of all religion among men. Equally pernicious are thoſe ſpeeches and arguments, which, while they ſeem to admit the being of GOD, inſinuate, that he did not create, and does not rule and govern the world:—Or, allowing his univerſal providence, in giving general laws to nature, while they deny his *particular providence*, or his ordering and

over-ruling all the particular actions of his creatures.—Nor is it a whit better to deny GOD's moral government of his rational creatures; that he is the *observer of men*; the witneſs and judge, the rewarder and puniſher of their moral conduct. To this may be added the vile guilt of robbing GOD of any of his perfections, of his omniſcience, omnipreſence, his holineſs, juſtice, mercy or truth;—or of extolling any of theſe perfections, to the prejudice of the reſt.

(2.) Blaſphemy: Either curſing GOD, as *Job's* wife would have perſuaded him to do; or challenging GOD to come forth, and do his worſt; or boldly and inſolently defying his vengeance; or charging him fooliſhly, as cruel and unjuſt, and laying more on us than we deſerve; or boldly calling down his vengeance upon ourſelves or others; or ſporting with his judgments, undervaluing his mercies, and ridiculing his works, or word, or providences. This is to do all that we can to debaſe and vilify the Almighty, by ſpeaking of him in a manner that we dared not to do of a dignified fellow-worm.

(3.) Profanity, nearly bordering on the former. Speaking ſlightly and diſreſpectfully of holy things and ordinances, and that holineſs which is the image of GOD on his people;—mimicking and mocking holy

actions, ſuch as prayer, preaching, the ſacraments, and the like;—making a jeſt of the ſcriptures, and uſing them proverbially to profane purpoſes;—ſpeaking ſlightingly of the laws of GOD and the rules of holineſs, as not worth our notice;—making a mock at ſin as a mere trifle, and talking of the moſt awful and ſerious matters, ſuch as death, judgment, heaven and hell, in ſuch a ſlight, vain, and ſportive manner, as plainly ſhews that we have no practical belief of them.

(4.) Solemn perjury; or calling GOD to witneſs a known lie, and praying down his vengeance upon us, in caſe our declaration be not true, when we know that it is not.

(5.) Common ſwearing; which by the frequent and familiar abuſe of GOD's holy name, leſſens our own reverence and that of others for an oath; turns the venerable name of JEHOVAH, into a mere *ſcarecrow*, or an *empty ſound*, to convey our helliſh paſſions to others, and paves the way to *cuſtomary, horrid perjury*. This is an abuſe of the tongue, which, beſides its being forbidden by the word of GOD, on the penalty of his ſevereſt diſpleaſure, is attended with neither pleaſure, profit nor honor;—is rude, barbarous, uncivil, and unmeaning, and fit only for *devils* and *damned ſpirits*.

(6.) The common and profane uſe of *GOD's name*, even where neither curſing,

ſwearing, nor damning is annexed to it: ſuch as, O God! O Lord! O Chriſt! *E Gad! O Je!* and God bleſs us! Chriſt bleſs us! and the like, when they are ſpoken in a *light*, *unmeaning*, *customary* manner: For, as GOD's name is ſacred and glorious, ſo every *common use* of it, is an *irreverent abuse* of it, and is expreſsly forbidden in the third commandment, "Thou ſhalt not "take the name of the Lord thy GOD in "vain," &c.

2. As the next important uſe of the tongue, is to promote the good of our fellow creatures; ſo, whatever tends directly, or indirectly to hurt or injure our neighbor, in any of his intereſts, is a *vile*, *unchriſtian*, *diabolical* abuſe of it. Indeed, all the above-mentioned abuſes of it, are againſt *chriſtian charity:* For, though they directly and immediately tend to diſhonor GOD, yet they mediately and indirectly tend to corrupt and ruin our neighbor. Indeed, whatever ſin comes the length of the tongue, *is*, and neceſſarily *muſt be* defiling to all around us, who are diſpoſed to receive infection. But the abuſes of the tongue, which are moſt immediately repugnant to chriſtian charity, are the following: (1.) *Direct lying*, or *untruth:* For, as the tongue and ſpeech were given to be a true and regular *index* and *interpreter* of the mind; ſo a man who ſpeaks not truth, is

like a *clock* whoſe hand points to the wrong hour, or like a *compass* whoſe needle deviates from the true pole, *useless* and *worth nothing*. Beſides, as truth is the foundation of all right intercourſe between men, ſo there could be no living in ſociety, or tranſacting buſineſs with our fellow creatures, if falſehood prevailed univerſally. Indeed, truth is ſo *sacred*, *valuable* and *important* a branch of chriſtian morality, and ſo eſſentially neceſſary to the well-being of human ſociety, that it ſhould never be violated, even in jeſt, or upon the ſlighteſt and moſt trivial occaſions.

(2.) Diſſimulation: Either by wilfully concealing neceſſary truth, or ſpeaking in a doubtful, ambiguous, enigmatical manner, with a deſign to deceive or miſlead our neighbor.

(3.) Double-dealing; being fair to our neighbor's face, and otherwiſe behind his back.

(4.) Miſrepreſenting a *story* or *fact*, which is one of the moſt miſchievous kinds of lying and back-biting; for, by omitting *one single word* or *circumstance* of a ſtory or fact, it may be quite altered, to the unſpeakable prejudice of our neighbor and of the truth.

(5.) Deceitful promiſing: Cauſing our neighbor to rely on a promiſe, which we either do not intend to perform at all, or

which we have no hope of being able to perform punctually, at the time and in the manner propoſed: This makes unſpeakable confuſion in the *trading world*, and in every other department of life, and tends effectually to ruin our character, and very often our neighbor's too, who is led to deceive others on the ſtrength of our promiſe.

(6.) Bearing falſe witneſs againſt our neighbor; either by telling known and malicious lies, to the prejudice of our neighbor, in the way of calumny, ſlander and back-biting; or by unneceſſarily abetting, propagating and ſpreading the ſlanders of others, whom we have reaſon to ſuſpect of malice againſt him: Much more, by taking away his life, intereſt, or good name, by perjury.

(7.) Speaking the very worſt that we can, of our neighbor, conſiſtent with truth, with a deſigned concealing any good qualities he poſſeſſes, on purpoſe to hurt his character or intereſt, or to impede his uſefulneſs: For, we may do unſpeakable hurt often, even by ſpeaking *improper* and *unseasonable* truths: But nothing ſhort of *christian charity* and *prudence* can direct in this matter.

(8.) Divulging and *blabbing* out ſuch ſecrets as our neighbor may have, in confidence entruſted us with, either with a malicious deſign to hurt him, or through

mere imprudence, and a tattling diſpoſition.

(9.) All ſuch abuſive, ignominious names and inſulting language, either *of* or *to* our neighbor, as tends to break chriſtian charity, ſtir up anger, and occaſion quarrels and law-ſuits; which beſides their provoking nature and unhappy conſequences, prove the want of charity, meekneſs, humility and patience, and are a ſcandal and diſgrace to our common chriſtianity.*

(10.) All ſporting with, and mocking at the *sins* and *natural infirmities* of our neighbor, and ſpeaking leſſening, degrading things of him, on account of the latter.

(11.) Vain, *idle*, *unedifying* converſation, which neither tends to *comfort* or *improve* either ourſelves or others, eſpecially if it is continued long, to the deſtruction of our own or our neighbor's precious time: For, we are told, we ſhall "give an account of "every idle word we ſpeak at the day of "judgment."

(12.) Propagating evil, pernicious principles and doctrines, which tend to poiſon our neighbor's mind, and to pave the way for a vicious practice.

(13.) Flattering our neighbor in his follies and vices, and thereby feeding his pride and ſtrengthening his hands in folly and wickedneſs; more eſpecially, with the deteſtable view of getting ſome favor from

* *Matth. v. 21,——26.*

him, or advantage over him, as the reward of this iniquity.

(14.) Abuſing our neighbor's confidence in us, by giving him bad or ruinous advice, when we hope to benefit by his complying with it.

(15.) Corrupting our neighbor, and ſeducing *him* or *her* to ſin, and thereby committing the very worſt kind of murder, both upon the ſoul and body of our neighbor.

(16.) By filthy ſongs, or corrupt and profane ſpeeches, polluting and debauching the minds and hearts of our neighbors, and inducing them to the love and practice of ſin.

(17.) Inſtead of comforting the ſick, afflicted and diſtreſſed, laughing at and inſulting their miſeries, and thereby doubling the burthen of their ſorrows.

3. The ſins of the *tongue* are the moſt numerous claſs of all our ſins, except thoſe of the *heart;* and indeed, they will never be much leſſened, until the heart is renewed and ſanctified by divine grace.

4. As the ſins of the tongue are the *most destructive*, as well as the *most numerous*, we had need to ſet a double guard over the motions of this unruly member, ſeeing that in no way are we like more to diſgrace our chriſtian profeſſion, than by an unbridled tongue.

5. The right uſe and government of the tongue, is one of the *leaſt doubtful proofs*

of true religion.—"If any man offend not "in word, the ſame is a perfect man. If "any man among you ſeem to be religious "and bridle not," &c.*

ESSAY XXXVIII.

The best METHOD *of maintaining* PEACE, LOVE *and* UNITY *among* CHRISTIAN BRETHREN.

1. CONSIDER, that although chriſtianity is a *perfect inſtitution*, and tending to make *chriſtians perfect;* yet chriſtians being only in the way of cure, in a ſtate of recovery, do not arrive at abſolute perfection in this life, at leaſt, not before death.

2. It is therefore *abſurd* and *unreaſonable* in one chriſtian to expect abſolute perfection in the character and temper of another, while here below in the ſchool of Chriſt. As long as I live, I will have my failings and infirmities, and my brother will have his.—Hence ariſes,

3. The duty of, and obligation to, *mutual forbearance* among chriſtian brethren: For, if I hope and expect that any brother will *bear with my failings* and *infirmities* in temper and conduct, and will have pity

* *James* i. 26.——iii. 2.

and compaſſion on my weakneſs; juſtice and charity require that *I should bear with his*, and not be *over rigid* and *severe* in my requirements from him. If not, I *do not* unto others, as I *would they should do unto me*, and am become a tranſgreſſor of this golden rule of equity.

4. If this chriſtian maxim of *bear and forbear*, or of *pitying*, and, in love, *forgiving one another*, is not regarded and obſerved, there cannot poſſibly be any ſuch thing as a chriſtian ſociety, great or ſmall, held together upon earth.

5. The failings and imperfections of our chriſtian brethren, though very undeſirable in themſelves, yet are over-ruled to ſerve excellent purpoſes in this ſtate of trial and probation: Upon them are grafted ſome of the nobleſt chriſtian virtues, ſuch as *charity*, *meekness*, *patience*, *self-denial*, *compassion*, *forbearance*, and a *forgiving temper*—and they are excellent *touch-stones*, whereby we may examine and prove our own ſpirits, and diſcover whether we are indeed poſſeſſed of theſe chriſtian graces, *i. e.* whether we are chriſtians.

6. Wholly to break ſociety and fellowſhip with my chriſtian brother or brethren, becauſe *he* or *they* have offended me, ſpeaks the moſt unſufferable pride.—It is, in plain conſtruction, to preſume that I myſelf am perfect and blameleſs, and need no forbearance or forgiveneſs from my brethren.

7. If GOD ſhould break with us for every offence, what would become of us? Yet the example of GOD and of Chriſt are expreſsly ſet before us for our imitation in this duty.*

8. But what are the terms and conditions of forgiving, or being reconciled with our chriſtian brother, when he offends us? I anſwer, *ſigns of true penitence;* and to forgive him, and be reconciled with him, and keep up chriſtian fellowſhip and communion with him, upon *these ſigns*, is a chriſtian duty ſo indiſpenſibly neceſſary, that our Saviour has charged us, if our chriſtian brother offend us, not only *ſeven times*, but even *ſeventy times ſeven, i. e.* four hundred and ninety times in one day, and return, and ſay, *I repent*, we muſt *as often forgive him.*†

9. But are there not ſome offences, which, though they claim our forgiveneſs, yet give juſt cauſe of our quitting all chriſtian fellowſhip and ſociety with our brethren? Anſwer. No offence can juſtify *private revenge*, in a chriſtian. If my brother ſhould even attempt to take away my life, and turn again and ſhew ſigns of true ſorrow and penitence, I muſt as a chriſtian, forgive him and be reconciled with him; though, in ſuch caſes, public juſtice muſt

* Eph. iv. 2,—32. Col. iii. 13, 14.
† Matth. xviii. 15,—35.

be allowed to take place for the good of ſociety: But, a man who is called a *brother*, may, by the *nature* and *number* of his offences, and by a *proud*, *haughty*, *impenitent* diſpoſition, render himſelf wholly unworthy of chriſtian fellowſhip and communion in any ſociety: yet ſo as to be again received and re-admitted, upon giving proper ſigns of true penitence.

10. But muſt we *so put up with*, and *forbear* the failings and infirmities of our chriſtian brethren, as to neglect the duties of *reproof* and *admonition* leſt we break the bond of peace, and provoke or diſpleaſe our offending brother? Anſwer. By no means. This would be to *ſuffer ſin upon our brother*. *Unity* and *peace* among chriſtian brethren, muſt be founded on, and comport with truth, integrity and a charitable zeal for each other's welfare. We are to continue rebuking and exhorting, in a chriſtian manner, but never to break the bond of chriſtian fellowſhip, till men appear to be *incorrigible reprobates*. *I* have *one failing*, *you* have *another*: I muſt bear with your failing, while I uſe every endeavor to correct it; *you* muſt do the ſame by *me*. No giving up with this mutual duty, till we both get to heaven; where, being both perfect, we ſhall have no need of mutual forbearance and forgiveneſs.

11. I will not renounce or diſown my *natural brother*, nor quit the family, though he offends me, or is angry with me without cauſe. He is my *brother*, and a multitude of tender and endearing conſiderations plead forgiveneſs, and a re-eſtabliſhment of peace and unity: And ſhall I renounce and diſown a *chriſtian brother*, and quit the *fellowſhip of the ſaints*, for the like reaſon, where the obligations to brotherly love are much more *numerous*, *ſacred* and *noble*, and the motives to forgiveneſs and unity, much more tender and endearing?

12. The ſame reaſons which will engage us to quit one chriſtian ſociety, becauſe of the failings and infirmities of our brethren, ſhould engage us to quit the fellowſhip of the church itſelf; and then we renounce all union and communion with the body of Chriſt, and putting ourſelves out of the way of all the means of ſalvation, do *virtually* renounce heaven itſelf, *i. e.* apoſtatize!

13. If we are indeed chriſtians, we muſt all *meet in heaven*, and *there* live together as friends, in one ſociety for ever: And ſhall we part ſociety for every trifle on the road, where we have ſo much need of each other's mutual advice, reproof, forbearance and charity?

14. Conſider the damage done to chriſtianity by *ſchism* and *diviſions* among chriſtian *brethren*; the pleaſure it gives to the

devil; the tendency it has to prevent others from uniting themſelves to thoſe communities, from which deſerters have carried off an evil report, and the malicious and wicked triumph it gives to the envious enemies of chriſtian union, communion and peace, and the injury it does to the great and noble deſigns of ſuch ſocieties.

15. If a deſerter from a religious ſociety ſhould be aſked by an enemy of religion, what his reaſon was for deſerting? Conſider the danger he is in of wounding religion in the anſwer he muſt make. 'I did not 'like the men; or, I did not like their pro-'ceedings; or, I got no good, but rather 'harm, by being of the number.' Here a man ſpeaks at once *uncharitably* of his chriſtian brethren, and *falsely* and *unfavorably* of the ways of GOD: For, few men are ſo juſt and modeſt as to declare the true reaſons of ſuch a conduct, and to lay the blame, where it properly is, upon their own fickleneſs, inconſtancy, unchriſtian diſpoſition, and diſtaſte and diſreliſh to that which is good; or, perhaps, a mean and vile ambition to pleaſe and gratify ſome declared and malicious enemy to ſo good a deſign.

16. Let a man conſider, whether, on his *death-bed*, he could approve of having broken the bonds of chriſtian peace and unity, and quitted a ſociety, formed on chriſtian principles, and in which he might have both

done and *received* ſome ſpiritual good; merely, becauſe all his chriſtian brethren were not juſt, in all reſpects, ſuch as he would have them; while he himſelf had poſſibly as great failings, as any among them.

17. Real *offences* from our chriſtian brethren cannot juſtify our quitting chriſtian communion; much leſs *ſupposed offences*, or *real benefits*, ſo miſcalled.

ESSAY XXXIX.

The RULE *of judging our* BRETHREN; *againſt* RASHNESS *and* CENSORIOUSNESS.

THE general rule given by our Saviour to this purpoſe, may be found, Matth. vii. 1, &c. "Judge not that ye be not judged," &c.—It is evident, however, from *reason* and from *other ſcriptures*, that this rule has a great many important exceptions, and that our Saviour does not mean to prohibit *every kind* of judging of our neighbor.—For,

1. The words and actions of ſtate criminals, againſt the laws of their country and the peace and welfare of civil ſociety, *may* and *ought* to be judged, condemned, and puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate, whom GOD hath ſet apart for that very purpoſe.*

* *Rom. xiii. 1—8.*

2. The words and actions of chriſtian profeſſors, as members of chriſtian ſocieties, againſt the laws of Chriſt, and the duties of their chriſtian calling, may, and ought to be judged, cenſured, condemned, and ſpiritually puniſhed, by the *miniſters* and other proper officers of ſuch ſocieties, who are authorized by GOD to this buſineſs.*

3. It is ſo far from being a *ſin*, that it is an eminent proof and branch of love and chriſtian charity, to fear for our chriſtian brethren, and be jealous over them with a godly jealouſy, leſt they ſhould be overtaken by the temptations which ſurround them, and to warn and admoniſh them againſt their danger ;†—alſo, to *judge* and *condemn* them for things plainly *erroneous* in their principles, or *immoral* in their conduct, and in tenderneſs and love, ſharply to reprove and rebuke them.‡

4. We *may* and *muſt*, yea, we are directed and commanded, to judge of men by their words, actions, and outward deportment; indeed, it is next to impoſſible for us not to exerciſe our judgment in ſome way or other, about every action we ſee and attend to; and truly, without the exerciſe of this faculty of judging, we would have no rule or guide in our tranſac-

* 1 Cor. v. 11, 12. Heb. xiii. 17.
† 2 Cor. xi. 3.
‡ *Lev. xix.* 17. James v. 19, 20.

tions with mankind, but ſhould often be unavoidably expoſed to the greateſt injuries.

5. Conſequently, when our neighbor gives clear proof of his wickedneſs, by a continued ſeries of wicked words and actions, and by a manifeſt diſinclination to that which is good, we have certainly a right to *judge of the tree*, by the *badness of its fruit*, and to condemn ſuch an one as a *bad man*; yet not interfering with his future ſtate, as he is ſtill in the place of repentance.*

6. The *kind of judging* therefore here forbidden by our Saviour, muſt be *rash*, *cenſorious*, *ignorant*, *uncharitable* judging; a judging, not ſo much of men's perſons, as their ſtates, not ſo much of men's actions, as of their intentions; and may be confined to the following particulars.

(1.) Judging out of our province, or paſſing a judgment on perſons or things which we have no right to interfere with. Miniſters have no right to interfere in the proper office of magiſtrates; nor magiſtrates, in thoſe *peculiar* to miniſters.† The apoſtle would not *cenſure*, or *inflict ſpiritual punishments* on thoſe who were *out of the church*.‡

(2.) Pragmatically judging, deciding and determining in matters above our

* Mark vii. 15. James i. 26.——iii. 11, 14.
† Luke xii. 13, 14.
‡ Cor. v. 12.

knowledge and reach, and where we can have no evidence of the truth, which is the only ground of right judging :—Such as *ignorant men*, cenſuring *deep and learned opinions*,—or our taking upon us to judge of the *thoughts* and *deſigns* of men's *hearts*.

(3.) Severe cenſuring and judging of others, for things in their own nature indifferent. Pretending that to be wrong in men, which we cannot prove to be ſo; requiring that in them, which GOD hath not required; forbidding that to them which GOD hath not forbidden, and condemning them for not *doing* or *forbearing* ſuch things.

(4.) Blind and *raſh* judging of our neighbor, without plain and ſufficient conviction of his guilt. A diſpoſedneſs to cenſure, and paſs ſentence againſt him, before we know the crime, or know he is guilty of it: Suſpecting him of evil principles and evil deſings in his actions, and raiſing theſe ſuſpicions into accuſations againſt him, before full evidence, or any evidence at all appears, whereon to ground theſe ſuſpicions.—This is cenſorioufneſs and raſh judging with a witneſs; inconſiſtent with *equity* or *brotherly love*.

(5.) Taking up an evil report againſt our neighbor, upon *hear-say* or mere *common fame*, and joining with the cenſorious and malevolent world, in the *hue* and *cry* againſt

our neighbor, before a particular and candid inquiry into the truth of the allegation. This proves that we have no chriſtian love for our neighbor, no tenderneſs for his good name; but that we delight in ſcandal, and are evil diſpoſed to our neighbor.

(6.) Cruelly and unmercifully making the very worſt of our neighbor's conduct, without making proper allowances for the temptations he lay under, and the diſadvantageous circumſtances in which theſe temptations might attack him. Theſe often greatly *alleviate* the guilt of the actions; and ſometimes totally *alter their nature*, and even *juſtify* them. See the *ſhew bread* eaten by *David*, and the ears of corn plucked by our *Saviour's diſciples*.

(7.) Prejudice and *partiality* in judging and condemning the actions of others; cenſuring them through hatred or diſlike of their perſon, rather than an abhorrence of their crimes; paſſing that fault over ſlightly in ourſelves, or in our friends, which we aggravate and condemn without mercy in our enemies, or even in indifferent persons; being quick in ſeeing the *mote in our brother's eye*, while we excuſe and juſtify *the beam in our own*.

(6.) Uncharitable judging of others; which includes a number of caſes:—1. All evil ſurmiſings, and groundleſs ſuſpicions *and jealouſies*.—2. Putting the worſt con-

ſtruction on men's conduct, while it will bear better.—3. Taking upon us to judge of men's thoughts and principles, when there is nothing reproachful in their actions. —4. Judging of men's *ſpiritual* ſtate and condition, that it is evil, upon reaſons which GOD's word does not juſtify.—5. Running down a character by the wholeſale, when there may be many *good* and *praiſe worthy* things in it.—6. Condemning *whole nations* or *religious* ſects of men in the lump, when there are many excellent perſons among them.—7. Imputing to men opinions and conſequences, which they do not allow nor hold, in order to expoſe them to hatred and contempt.—8. To interpret calamities which befal people, as *judgments from* GOD for things we diſlike in them; or for ſome ſuppoſed injuries to us, or to our friends.—9. To be backward to admit fair tokens and proofs of repentance for *real injuries* done us; and to be unforgiving and irreconcilable, and raſhly to give up all our hopes of ſinners, and all endeavors for their good.*—10. To publiſh the real faults of others *without occaſion*, or without a very good and warrantable deſign;—and much more to do it *wantonly* and *maliciouſly*.—11. To ſlander *whole families*, *kindreds*, *nations*, *ſects*, or *parties* of men, for faults done by *one* or *a few* of them,

* Cor. xiii.

which the others could not prevent, and which they do not approve.

Reasons against censoriousness, or rash and uncharitable judging.

(1.) It is iniquitous in itſelf. (2.) It is againſt the golden rule; "What ye would that others ſhould do unto you," &c. (3.) It is odious to GOD, being the very reverſe of that charity which he has eſtabliſhed as the rule and principle of all our tranſactions with our neighbor. (4.) It is ſo hateful to men, that cenſorious perſons are generally paid in their own coin, and their own actions the more ſtrictly ſcanned and the more ſeverely cenſured.—"For with what judgment ye judge ye ſhall be judged, and with what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you again."* It is a dreadful abuſe of our time, and miſuſe of our talents, turning our thoughts and judgment uncharitably on the actions and affairs of others, while we have ſo much need to *study, judge*, and *condemn* ourſelves.†

ESSAY XL.

Of a PEACEABLE DISPOSITION *and the opposite* EVILS.

1. THE very diſtinguiſhing *ſpirit* and *genius* of chriſtianity is *peace* and

* *Matth. vii. 1.* † 1 Cor. xi. 31.

love; and one of the fruits of the ſpirit is *peace*;—not only a ſenſe of reconciliation and peace with GOD through the merit and interceſſion of Chriſt, and, as a fruit of this *peace of conscience*, or an inward complacential well-pleaſedneſs with our own ſtate and frame, ariſing from the joyful hope that we are objects of the divine favor, and have paſſed from death unto life;—but alſo a *loving* and *peaceable* diſpoſition *towards all men*, ariſing from chriſtian principles and motives.

2. This peaceableneſs being a fruit of the holy Spirit, muſt *begin*, and be *radicated* in the *heart* and *temper*. So far as it is truly chriſtian, it ſuppoſes a *change of nature:* For, although ſome men are more indolent and eaſy in their temper than others, and are naturally averſe to quarreling, and fond of eaſe and quiet, yet they cannot be ſaid to *love* and *study peace*, upon goſpel motives, until their natures are changed and renewed by the GOD *of peace*. Such perſons may be ſaid to flee from contention, as a coward from a man that bruiſes him; not from a true and hearty diſlike to quarreling or love of friendſhip.

3. Peaceableneſs, therefore, as a chriſtian temper, ſuppoſes not only an hearty love and value for peace, from the amiableneſs of ſuch a temper *in itself*, from the *authority of* GOD who enjoins it, in imitation of

the example and Spirit of Chriſt, who ſet us the brighteſt pattern of it, and from the valuable purpoſes it ſerves in the world and church; but alſo, zealous and unwearied endeavors to maintain a peaceable diſpoſition in ourſelves towards all men, and to promote it among others. A pretence to love peace, while we are litigious and provoking, impatient, fretful and peeviſh, ſtubborn and refractory, and while we promote the quarrels of others, is the vileſt and baſeſt hypocriſy.

4. The apoſtle tells us, "If it be poſſible, as much as in us lies, to follow peace with all men." This plainly ſuppoſes, that, however we ought zealouſly and ſincerely to endeavor it, and to let nothing fail on our part, in order to obtain this univerſal peace with mankind, yet the thing may be often *impossible to us;* and that, in ſuch caſes, we cannot charge ourſelves with blame.

5. This may happen through the perverſe humors of thoſe with whom we have to do. Captious perſons often take offence without any occaſion, and will hearken to no reaſon againſt their preconceived prejudices. The more you yield to them, ſtill the more unreaſonable are their demands; ſo that the only way of being at peace with them, is to break off all intercourſe and *connexion.**

* *Pſal. cxx. 5, 6, 7.*

6. With others we cannot be at peace without violating our conſciences, or acting contrary to our duty. If we do our duty to them, or upon them, they will not be at peace with us: But we cannot, we muſt not buy their peace and good-will ſo dear, as to ſell our own peace with GOD for the purchaſe. Neither *truth*, nor *holiness*, nor *juſtice* are to be ſacrificed for peace. To obtain peace *with men*, we muſt not make ſhipwreck of faith and a good conſcience towards GOD. Conſequently, thoſe who in a modeſt and charitable manner, maintain and defend their own religious principles againſt adverſaries,—or zealouſly reprove vice, cannot juſtly be charged with *unpeaceableness*.

7. To do what in us lies to follow peace with all men, implies, that we humbly lay aſide all *pride* and *prejudice* in the purſuit of peace; that we *try*, and *try*, and *try* again, without wearying, as far as we lawfully may, to obtain this deſirable end; and that we labour zealouſly to promote the peace of our neighbors, without widening their differences by ill offices.* A *proud man* can never be a *truly peaceable man*. He who would ſeek peace aud purſue it, muſt not be aſhamed to humble himſelf, confeſs his faults, and make every needful and reaſonable conceſſion, in order to the re-eſtabliſhing of peace.

* *Pſal. xxxiv, 14.*

8. This chriſtian grace of peaceableneſs, is not confined to a few friends, or to a favorite party, but muſt extend to *all men.* Some think, that if they can live at peace in their families, with their friends, their next neighbors, or their church, it is immaterial what temper they have to the reſt of the world, thoſe of other iſlands, kingdoms, or religious profeſſions. But peaceableneſs, as a chriſtian grace, ariſes from a principle of *univerſal love and charity to all men*, and therefore has *all men* for its object. As we are to love *all men*, and do good to *all men*, ſo, as much as in us lies, we are to live peaceably with *all men;* and for this purpoſe, our Saviour teacheth us to conſider *every man* as *our neighbor*, and every *true chriſtian* in the world, be he of what denomination he will, as *our brother.* To this purpoſe,

9. We ſhould be careful to behave inoffenſively to all men.* A peaceable temper will reſtrain us from inſolence, rudeneſs, injurious reflections, and outrageous paſſions towards others: It will engage us to ſtudy men's tempers, and be tender of uſing ſuch innocent freedoms, with paſſionate perſons, as might be no temptation to others, who are of a milder temper. It will reſtrain us from acting the buſy-body, by intermeddling unneceſſarily in the affairs

* 1 Cor. x. 32.

of others, or prying into their ſecrets with a deſign to reveal them, whereby they are provoked and others inflamed. It will alſo engage us for conſcience ſake to give unto all, in their ſeveral ſtations, that honor and reſpect which is due to them, and the neglect of which might be juſt matter of offence.*

10. A truly peaceable man is *ſlow* in taking offence: *ſlow* to wrath. It is amazing how many diſturbances and contentions happen in the world, by *apprehending offences* where none are either *meant* or *given*. A peaceable perſon, will be loath to ſuppoſe that an affront is deſigned againſt him; he will be ready to put the beſt conſtruction on doubtful words or actions; nor will he over-rate a real offence, or be willing to reſent it in a haſty and rigid manner.

11. A peaceable man is not implacable, but is deſirous to regain and re-eſtabliſh peace as ſoon as poſſible. Peace is his element; the very temper and complexion of his ſoul; and therefore, when a breach happens, he watches and lays hold of the very firſt opportunity of reconciliation; finding himſelf unhappy while in a ſtate of variance with his neighbor.†

12. A peaceable man will rather put up

* 1 Tim. i. 15. Prov. xxvi. 20. 1 Theſſ. iv. 11.
† Matth. v. 23, 24. Luke xvii. 3, 4.

with many ſmaller injuries, than proceed to the rigor of juſtice, or commence law-ſuits, which are not only expenſive and tedious, but almoſt ever widen the breach, inflame the angry paſſions, and procraſtinate and protract the wiſhed for term of reconciliation.* Abraham affords us a fine example of a peaceable temper.†

13. We ſhould be moſt aſſiduous in cultivating peace and good will, with ſuch with whom we are moſt nearly connected, ſuch as our families, neighborhoods and churches; for, as from theſe, we have daily temptations to anger and contention, ſo our ſtrongeſt guard ſhould be placed where the greateſt danger lies. Beſides, the maintaining and promoting of peace in theſe connections, is the ſureſt way of promoting our own duty and happineſs, and that of others around us.

14. Above all, chriſtians are under the higheſt and moſt inviolable obligations to be at peace with one another, by the *laws* and *motives* of their holy religion. They are the children of the God *of peace;* the diſciples of the *Prince of peace;* peace is the bond of union among themſelves; Chriſt has bequeathed his peace to them, and if they are *chriſtians indeed*, they are animated and aided by *the Spirit of peace and*

* Matth. v. 39,—41.
† *Gen. xiii. 8, 9.*

love: Beſides, by an *unpeaceable, ſtrife-ful, contentious* temper, they at once *belie* and *diſgrace* their profeſſion, and injure the intereſts of their common chriſtianity.*

15. An unpeaceable temper is a *carnal, miſchievous, diabolical* temper.†

16. It is always the fruit of *pride, ambition* and paſſion.‡

17. It is a temper which brings continual diſquietude and torment to a man's ſelf.

18. On the contrary; a *peaceable* temper is a *happy* temper, and attracts the regard and eſteem of all.

19. It is the diſtinguiſhing temper of heaven, and a neceſſary qualification for that bleſſed place and ſtate.‖

ESSAY XLI.

Of a MERCIFUL TEMPER, *and its oppoſites.*

1. MERCY, is a *kind, compaſſionate, ſympathiſing* concern for the *miſerable*, which prompts to a readineſs to help, relieve, or at leaſt alleviate their miſeries, when it is *in the power* of the merciful, and *fit* and *right* to be done.

* 1 Cor. xiv. 33. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Eph. iv. 3,—6. James iii. 17.
† 1 Cor. iii. 3. James iii. 13.
‡ James iv. 1. ‖ Iſa. lvii. 2.

2. As there could have been no place for the exercise of the divine mercy, unless misery had made its entrance among creatures; so, nor could there have been place for the exercise of mercy between man and man, if mankind were not miserable.

3. Mercy, as it is a christian virtue, must have its seat in the *heart* and *temper*; therefore, we are commanded to "put on bowels of mercies." It is also like all other christian graces, a *fruit of the Spirit;* a part of that image of God reinstampt upon the fallen soul, in conversion.—There may be a *counterfeit appearance of mercy* in the actions, from *ostentation*, or *base* and *unworthy designs*, where there are no *bowels of mercies*, but rather a *cruel* or *unfeeling* disposition. The apostle puts the highest outward appearance of a merciful disposition which can be well conceived, and yet supposes, that the person may be wholly void of the grace of mercy itself.*

4. A merciful disposition, where it is, will give evidence of itself by *outward correspondent actions*. A pretence to a merciful disposition, where there is no outward fruits of it, when proper opportunities offer themselves, is the vilest mockery; and is finely exposed by the apostles *James* and *John*.†

* 1 Cor. xiii. 3.
† James ii. 15, 16. 1 John iii. 17, 18.

5. There may be a very merciful diſpoſition in the heart, where the perſon who has it, has it not in his power to give very convincing proofs of it, by his actions. However, where it is, it will prompt a perſon to *do all that he can* to give proof of it. He will, at leaſt, *pity* and *sympathize* with his ſuffering fellow creature, and what he can do more, he will do it to relieve him. Now, if there be firſt a willing mind, it is accepted of GOD, according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

6. Mercy, as a chriſtian grace, has its firſt and *chief* reſpect to *men's ſouls*; the troubles and miſeries which they ſuffer, and the dangers to which they are expoſed by ſin: And indeed, this concern for the miſery of men's ſouls, is the chief character which diſtinguiſhes *chriſtian mercy* from *mere humanity*. How many good natured men in the world, whoſe hearts bleed to ſee a fellow creature in bodily pain or miſery, and who would go almoſt any lengths to relieve him; yet have no mercy on their own ſouls, or the ſouls of their fellow ſinners, but would ſee them go to hell, and help them thither, without the leaſt attempt to prevent it: But chriſtian mercy *bleeds*, and is *moved* chiefly by the *miſery* and *danger* of *human ſouls*; does all that it can to inſtruct the ignorant, and to reclaim the wicked and erroneous;

* 2 Cor. viii. 12.

and what it cannot do itſelf, it rejoices to ſee done by others, and gives every encouragement in its power, to deſigns and endeavors to reform men's manners and ſave their ſouls, that they may be plucked as brands out of the burning.—Noble proofs and examples of this merciful diſpoſition, we have in *Lot*, *David*, and the *prophets*, and eſpecially in *Chriſt* and his *apoſtles*.

7. Mercy is not confined to the *ſoul*, but reaches to the *whole man*. Here it ſtrikes in with *humanity*, and improves it; weeping with them that weep, and looking not only at its *own things*, but alſo on the *things of others*. It pities and ſympathizes with the pains and diſeaſes of others' bodies; the troubles and perplexities of their minds; their wants and neceſſities; their diſaſters and diſappointments; their opreſſions and afflictions. And when in its power, it labors to mitigate all theſe afflictions, by drawing out its ſoul to the hungry; by clothing the naked; by helping the ſick; by pleading the cauſe of the oppreſſed; by adminiſtering counſel to the perplexed, and comfort to the ſorrowing and afflicted. And whereas, *mere humanity* only does theſe things from *inſtinct*, and to eaſe the anxiety of the mind on the ſight of diſtreſs; —the merciful chriſtian does them from love to his neighbor, from a conſideration *of duty*, and from obedience to the authority of GOD.

8. But a merciful diſpoſition is ſeen in its greateſt luſtre and advantage, when it pities and forgives perſons who, by injurious treatment to ourſelves, are wholly at our mercy, and upon whom we have it fully in our power to glut our revenge; yea, when we may do ſo under the color of juſtice. This is *God-like* mercy indeed! But,

9. It belongs to chriſtian *wisdom* and *prudence* to judge, *to whom*, and *how far*, ſuch acts of mercy ſhould extend. That lenity which would prompt us to give up our rights upon all occaſions to lawleſs men, might often be of miſchievous conſequence:—It might often tend to harden ſinners in their vices, and embolden them to treat others as they have done us, with hopes of impunity. By forgiving a man who attempts my life, I may procure the murder of other innocent perſons. By pardoning and giving liberty to a robber, whom I have caught breaking open my houſe, and pillaging my goods, I embolden this villain to rob my neighbors. Nor is it in all caſes proper or prudent for a man to forgive perſonal injuries, without legal ſatisfaction and exemplary puniſhment. Acts of lenity and mercy to offenders, ſhould always conſiſt with a proper concern for the public good, and our own perſonal ſafety.

10. Chriſtian mercy, however, is always ſorry for the authors of injuries, and heartily wiſhes their *repentance* and *eternal welfare.* It will never admit of cruelty or revenge againſt an offender. If his crime will admit of it, it is willing to forgive him, upon proper marks of repentance. If puniſhment is neceſſary, it would have it to be of the mildeſt and gentleſt nature, that the offence will admit of; and it pities the perſon of the guilty ſufferer, and would rejoice if the puniſhment might be wholly remitted;—having nothing at heart but the intereſt of human ſociety, virtue and juſtice; and, like GOD, taking no pleaſure in the miſery of ſinners.

11. There is alſo ample room for the diſplay of mercy, in the exaction of debts. If the debtor is fallen into poverty by accidents or misfortunes, it will bear with him, if able; or if able, and circumſtances allow, will remit *part* or *whole* of the debt: Or, if he is even bankrupt by his own fault, and therefore, juſtly deſerves to ſuffer as a criminal, yet it will conſider the neceſſitous circumſtances of his innocent family and connexions, and will remit what it can on their behalf.

12. Though mercy ſhould extend to *all* in *these instances;* yet it will be ſhown in the *firſt place*, and in the *higheſt degree*, to thoſe whom GOD and nature hath con-

nected moſt intimately with us; ſuch as our families, relations and friends: For, it would be a prepoſterous diſpoſition, and not chriſtian mercy, to pity and help ſtrangers, while our own houſehold, kindred and friends were diſregarded by us, in their miſery.—Above all,

13. Our *chriſtian brethren* claim a *peculiar part* in our bowels of mercies. If one member ſuffers, all the members ſhould ſuffer with it. "We are to bear one ano-"ther's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of "Chriſt."

14. Our *heathen ſlaves* are proper objects and excellent teſts of a merciful diſpoſition. Their *caſe* and *ſtate* is allowed to be very *pitiable* and *miſerable* upon almoſt all accounts. They often provoke us, and needs muſt. They are, in a manner, entirely at our mercy, and their very lives in our hands. They are *our fellow creatures*, and *might* and *ſhould* be our *chriſtian brethren*. They are GOD's *creatures*, and *our neighbors*, whom we ſhould *love as ourſelves*. And ſurely, if a merciful man, will be merciful even to his beaſt, much more ought he to be ſo to his *human ſlave!*—It may therefore be depended on, that thoſe who have no pity for their ſlaves, but are of an *unfeeling*, *cruel*, *merciless* temper towards them, are ſtrangers to this grace.

15. This is one of the moſt amiable and God-like of all the chriſtian virtues, being that temper by which we do, in a moſt eminent manner, reſemble and bear the image of the bleſſed GOD, and his Son *Jesus* CHRIST; who forgive us *ten thousand talents*, and are merciful to the *evil* and *unthankful*.

16. It is declared, that they "ſhall have "judgment without mercy, who ſhew no "mercy;"* and, "that if we forgive not "men their treſpaſſes, neither will GOD "forgive us ours. With the the merciful, "(ſays David) GOD will ſhew himſelf mer-"ciful; and bleſſed are the merciful, for "they ſhall obtain the mercy of GOD."†

17. It needs not be added, that a merciful diſpoſition, is one of the moſt *amiable* and *endearing* accompliſhments in a man, and ſtands the faireſt chance of rendering him univerſally beloved by his fellow creatures.

18. Let us then, *as the elect of* GOD, *holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies*.

ESSAY XLII.

JUSTICE *between* MAN *and* MAN.

1. JUSTICE is a very extenſive virtue, and implies a *right* and *fit temper* and

* *James* ii. 13. † Pſal. xviii. 25. Matth. v. 7.

deportment towards all beings to whom we ſtand any ways related, with whom we are any way connected, and with whom we have any concern. In ſhort, "It is to ren-"der unto every one his due." And, in this *general view*, it may be called *integrity*, *uprightness* or *righteousness*.

2. If we act *juſtly* towards GOD, we ſhall love, reverence, and eſteem him ſupremely, and above all things; we ſhall believe, obey and truſt him without reſerve, and we ſhall worſhip and praiſe him, according to his glorious perfections.

3. If we are *juſt* to the *holy angels*, we ſhall love them as our fellow creatures; as the ſubjects and ſervants of our Redeemer; as pure, holy, and benevolent beings; and, more particularly, as miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter to them who are heirs of ſalvation, and as deeply and affectionately intereſting themſelves in *our good*, and in *our Redeemer's glory*.

4. If we are *juſt* to our *fellow* men, we ſhall love them as ourſelves; we ſhall ſympathize with, and help them in their wants and afflictions; we ſhall conſcientiouſly abſtain from *injuring* them in their perſons, families, reputation, or intereſts; we ſhall deal fairly, truly, candidly and equitably with them in all dealings and tranſactions of life; we ſhall perform to each of them the honors, duties, or ſervices, which of right

belong to them, according to the various relations in which they ſtand to us, and we ſhall do what we *can* and *ought* to promote both their temporal and eternal welfare.

5. If we are *juſt* to *ourſelves*, we ſhall prefer our ſouls to our bodies; eternity to time; and the favor of GOD and eternal happineſs, to all the alluring, deceitful offers of ſin. We ſhall be humble, patient, meek, modeſt, juſt, charitable, ſelf-denied, and every thing elſe which we ought to be.

6. But as juſtice between man and man, is that branch of equity or righteouſneſs, which we are here to conſider, it may be moſt beneficial to take a view of that excellent *rule* and *measure* of it laid down by our Saviour, Matth. vii. 12. "Therefore, "all things, whatſoever ye would that men "ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo unto "them."

7. The meaſure of our acting towards others, here propoſed, is not what they *actually do* to us, but what *we would they should do to us*. Yet this is the meaſure by which moſt men act towards their neighbors: They render evil for evil; railing for railing, &c. Nor will they do good to thoſe who will not do good to them. Nay, many think themſelves juſtified in cheating others, becauſe they firſt cheated them. But this is *retaliation* and *private revenge*, not *equity*. The goſpel

has taught us a quite different rule of acting, and denies to chriſtians the right of private revenge, farther than *self-defence* requires.†

8. It is not, *in all cases*, lawful to do unto others, what *we would* they ſhould do unto us, were we in their circumſtances, and they in ours, without preſuppoſing the *lawfulness* or *fitness* of the action. A criminal might be glad that his judge would acquit him; but could not *reasonably* expect it. A drunkard would be glad that his neighbor would intoxicate him, yet he ought not for that reaſon to make his neighbor drunk, becauſe it would be unlawful. A poor man might be glad if his rich neighbor would give his whole eſtate to him; yet how could he reaſonably expect it?

9. The *ſpirit* of the precept is plainly this: 'In all our tranſactions with our 'neighbor, we ought, laying aſide prejudice 'and partiality, to ſuppoſe ourſelves in our 'neighbor's place and circumſtances, and 'he in ours; and then we ſhould attentively conſider what we might *reasonably* and '*lawfully* expect from him, if he were in 'our place, and we in his; and accordingly, 'we ſhould be the ſame to him in our 'thoughts, words and actions, as we would '*have him to be unto us*, if the tables were 'turned.'

† Luke vi. 31,—35. Rom. xii. 19,—21.

10. Where *selfishness* and *prejudice* keep the poſſeſſion of the mind, men will never act right upon this rule; for, where theſe are, we ſhall ever expect *more* from others, than we would do unto them, if our circumſtances were changed. How common is it to ſee perſons make very *free* and *merry* with the failings of their neighbors and their families, and think they have a right to do ſo without giving offence? Yet when it falls to their turn to be *ſo treated*, they reſent *highly*, and perhaps *juſtly*, the ſame treatment from their neighbor. How many, who in their neceſſity, have no bounds in their expectations from their neighbors, and never think they do enough for them; yet have no bowels of compaſſion for the poor, when the tables are turned, and they become rich. All this proceeds from ſelfiſhneſs and prejudice; a want of conſidering what is right and fit to be done.

11. As to the *excellency* of this rule, and *our obligations* to conform to it, they are both ſelf-evident. It is founded on the *ſameneſs of nature* in men, and their *natural equality*. The relative and accidental differences between men, are ſmall in their own nature, and very tranſient and changeable. He that is now a king, may be ſoon a ſubject: The maſter may ſoon be a ſervant: The rich may ſoon be poor; and *the honorable* may fall into diſhonor and

contempt. I may need that juſtice or kindneſs from my neighbor to-morrow, which he demands from me to-day. It is plain then, that there ſhould be *one common rule* or *measure* of juſtice and equity for all men. If it is unjuſt to keep two kinds of weights and meaſures, one to *buy* with, and the other to *sell* by; it is ſurely equally unjuſt that I ſhould have *one* law for *myself*, and *another* for *my neighbor*.

12. This is a rule of juſtice which has obtained among all nations, it being a clear dictate of reaſon, and of the law of nature, —'Not to do to others what we would not 'bear from them; and to do to others, in 'all caſes, what we would reaſonably expect 'from them.'

13. As this is a rule, the equity of which is ſo clear and ſelf-evident, that none can diſpute or deny it; ſo it is eaſily carried about with a man in his memory; and an honeſt man of the weakeſt judgment can eaſily and quickly apply it, on the moſt ſudden emergencies. Moſt arts and ſciences are ſo tedious and intricate, that they are hard to learn and difficult to retain. The artiſt and mechanic can do little without his books and inſtruments.—But this art of doing juſtly depends only upon *one short single rule*, eaſily retained, and not eaſily forgotten. In ſhort, to act juſtly in all caſes for ordinary, needs only a *single hon-*

eſt appeal to the heart and conſcience; by the light of this rule; "all things whatſoe-"ver ye would that others ſhould do unto "you," &c.

14. This is *the law of the prophets:* It is a ſhort and comprehenſive ſummary of all the directions recorded in ſcripture, how one man ſhould behave towards another: For, as that precept, "thou ſhalt love thy neigh-"bor as thyſelf," is the fulfilling of the whole law, in the duty of *chriſtian charity;* ſo this is the fulfilling of the whole law in matters of *juſtice* and *equity*.

15. The uſe of this precept extends to the whole of our intercourſe with our fellow creatures, and to all our *thoughts* and *words* about them. It would prevent all raſh, uncharitable and cenſorious opinions and judgments of our fellow creatures, and all injurious actions towards them.—It would lead us to uſefulneſs and inoffenſiveneſs in converſation; to integrity and rectitude in all our dealings and commerce, and to a right method of treating thoſe who need our compaſſion or kindneſs. It would regulate our temper and conduct under provocations, and teach us a juſt and charitable way of ſpeaking and acting towards thoſe who differ from us in their *religious* or *other ſentiments*.—And, it would teach us a juſt and equitable conduct to ſuperiors, *inferiors*, and equals.

16. The *excellency* and *usefulness* of this rule, ſhew us the great importance of *self-acquaintance* and *reflection*, on which it is founded, and by the *medium* of which it muſt be practiſed on.

17. The equity of this great law and meaſure of juſtice, proves to a demonſtration, the *holiness*, *juſtice*, and *goodness* of GOD's laws; how far they are from deſerving the character of being *hard* and *grievous* impoſitions, tending to deprive us of our natural liberty. He who acts and lives juſtly, acts and lives according to the *law of his nature*, which is the law of *eternal reason*:—"And what doth the Lord "thy GOD require of thee, but to do juſtly, "to love mercy, and to walk humbly with "thy GOD."

18. We ſhould pray without ceaſing, that GOD may write this law on our ſouls, and keep it ever in the thoughts of the imaginations of our hearts, ſo that we may never ſwerve from this univerſal rule of righteouſneſs.

ESSAY XLIII.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.

1. THE *chriſtian hope* is a firm expectation of that future and eternal happineſs, which GOD hath promiſed to his

faithful obedient people, upon a rational and well-grounded perſuaſion, that they have complied with the terms of his gracious covenant.

2. The object of chriſtian hope is the *divine promises*, contained in GOD's word; for, it is upon his word that he cauſeth his ſervants to hope: And it ever preſuppoſes, a firm faith in theſe promiſes.—Chriſtian hope, therefore, is ever built upon *faith*, and can reach no farther than its foundation: For, we cannot rationally *hope for*, or *expect* that which we do not believe that we ſhall receive.

3. I have ſaid, the object of chriſtian hope is the divine promiſes; though it may be rather ſaid to be the bleſſings contained in the divine promiſes, the chief and moſt comprehenſive of which is, GOD himſelf, as the *chief good of our natures*, the comprehenſive ſum total of all our happineſs; and therefore it is ſaid, by way of eminence, "that our hope may be in GOD," as the ultimate object of it.* For, if we purſue every promiſed bleſſing or happineſs to the ſource of it, we will find it centered in GOD, and flowing from him.

4. Chriſt is alſo ſometimes called *our hope*, as the channel of all divine bleſſings to us, and the great *promulgator* and *revealer* of the divine promiſes. And we

* 1 Pet. i. 21.

are ſaid to abound in hope, through the power of the *holy Ghoſt;* becauſe, as he is the worker of *faith*, ſo of *hope*, in the hearts of chriſtians; bearing witneſs with their ſpirits, that they are children and heirs of GOD; confirming their rational inferences as to the goodneſs and ſafety of their ſtate; perſuading them of the power and faithfulneſs of GOD and the certain accompliſhment of his promiſes, and ſweetly aſſuring their hearts, ſo as to raiſe them above tormenting fear, anxious doubting, and diſtracting deſpair.

5. The primary foundations of chriſtian hope, as well as of chriſtian faith, are the *unchangeable truth* and *almighty power* of GOD.—He *cannot lie*, and he can do all things which are the objects of power; conſequently, he can neither *deceive our faith* nor *diſappoiut our hopes*. Whatſoever, therefore, GOD hath *ſaid* or *promiſed*, we can never confidently enough expect and hope for, nor firmly enough believe.

6. Men may be ſtrong in the chriſtian hope, giving glory to GOD; that is, they may firmly believe the truth of his word, and the ſure accompliſhment of his promiſes to his people, while they may be very doubtful of their own ſtate, and ſo be deprived of the *joy of hope:* For, as hope ſuppoſes faith, and faith reſts upon a divine promiſe; while we cannot clearly and ra-

tionally apply this promiſe to ourſelves, we cannot yet hope for the accompliſhment of it to ourſelves.—Yet we may clearly ſee our title to the promiſed bleſſings on condition we did but truly believe and apply the promiſe. Hence it clearly follows, that our hope muſt ever keep pace with the evidence of our title to the promiſed bleſſing. Where we have no rational evidence of this, we can have no rational hope; and according to the *ſtrength of our evidence*, ſuch will be the *ſtrength of our hope.*

7. Hence it is alſo clear, that all the hopes of wicked men, and even of men (however ſober, moral, and orderly in their lives) who are yet without any rational evidence of their being truly religious, are mere *wicked groundleſs preſumptions*, which only ſerve to keep up their fatal ſecurity, and to render their damnation the more certain and the more dreadful: For, how dreadful muſt it be for thoſe men to find all their *towering airy* hopes, piercing them like broken reeds, and breaking under them like a ſpider's web, only to render their fall into endleſs miſery and deſpair the deeper and more diſtreſſing?

8. Hence it appears, that *deſpair*, is a more promiſing ſymptom in wicked men, than the moſt *confident hopes.* And that the foundation of a true chriſtian hope in all ſuch, muſt be laid deep in an utter deſ-

pair of ever ſeeing the face of GOD, in mercy, while they continue void of true religion, and under the power of wicked habits.

9. Chriſtian hope is diſtinguiſhed from worldly hopes, by the *excellency of its objects*, and the *ſtability of its foundation*. Its principal object, as we obſerved, is GOD, and an eternal ſtate of glory and happineſs, in his preſence, wherein we ſhall be conformed to the image of his Son; and its foundation is the *divine power* and *faithfulness;* ſo that it is a *ſure*, *glorious* and *bleſſed* hope. But *all*, *all* ſublunary hopes are mean in their nature, uncertain in their attainment, and deceitful and unſatisfying in their fruition and enjoyment.

10. To hope for the perfection of our nature, and the full enjoyment of GOD, is a *glorious hope*, which by its very nature, tends to raiſe, purify and refine our ſouls, and which, when enjoyed, will leave us not a ſingle wiſh or deſire ungratified: But earthly hopes; the hopes of honors, wealth, power, or ſenſual pleaſures, are of a low, mean nature, and naturally tend to depreſs and ſenſualize the mind: And, even when they come to be attained, how do they diſappoint us? How little do they pleaſe and ſatisfy us? How often have we cauſe to be aſhamed of them? And how often does the very fruition of them turn out to be our greateſt evils and vexations? But it is pe-

culiar to the nature of the chriſtian hope, that it *maketh not aſhamed*, becauſe the fruition exceeds our higheſt expectations.

11. How uncertain are we of the attainment of our earthly hopes and deſires? How many have eagerly and diligently purſued ſome one trifling earthly hope (that, ſuppoſe, of being rich, or being honored or reſpected) all their days, and yet could never attain it, but have been perpetually croſſed and diſappointed in all their expectations? This is the reaſon why *young men* are generally more ſanguine in their hopes and expectations from the world, than *old men*, who, by a woful experience, have ſo often found all their hopes from it fruſtrated, and that all its moſt gay and promiſing appearances, are extremely flattering and deceitful. But it is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the chriſtian hope, that it is a ſure and certain hope; and thoſe who enjoy it know it to be ſo. Although the objects of the chriſtian's hope, are future and unſeen, yet his hope gives them a preſence and reality, and therefore the patient waiting for this hope, is attended with joy and comfort. The interval of a thouſand years did not weaken *Abraham's* hope of the promiſed *Meſſiah*, but he *rejoiced to ſee his day*, becauſe he knew that GOD *was faithful who promiſed.* Such alſo is the chriſtian's hope of future glory; though

he has not yet ſeen it, yet believing, he rejoices in aſſured expectation of it, with joy unſpeakable and full of glory.

12. Hope is exceeding ſuitable to our *preſent ſtate.*—In heaven it is excluded by full enjoyment, and in hell, by utter deſpair: But, as we are here in a *middle ſtate*, between the two worlds;—as we are now in a ſtate of trial and expectance, it is perfectly fit that we ſhould be governed and influenced by the hope of a future reward, which tends, on the one hand, to quicken our diligence in our proper work, and on the other, to preſerve us from ſlothful deſpondency.

13. Hope is highly neceſſary to the chriſtian in the preſent ſtate. Surrounded with temptations both terrifying and alluring, to draw us away from our duty, the hope of ſalvation is our *helmet* and *breaſtplate;* toſſed with the ſtorms of doubts, perplexities, worldly cares and perſecutions, hope is the *anchor of the ſoul*, ſure and ſteadfaſt, that enters within the vail, and, being fixed on the immortal ſhore, gives the ſoul ſecurity and reſt; haraſſed with ſore afflictions, and paſſing through the dark valley of the ſhadow of death, what could ſupport us but the chriſtian hope? This was the boaſt of the afflicted apoſtles; they gloried even in tribulations, rejoicing in the hope of the glory of GOD; they

reckoned their greateſt ſufferings not worthy to be compared with the glory to be revealed; looking at things inviſible and eternal, they knew their *light* and *momentary* afflictions wrought out for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This was the ſupport of *martyrs* under all their ſufferings in the cauſe of Chriſt: "Bleſſed are ye when all men perſecute you: "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great "is your reward in heaven."* In ſhort, hope ſets all the ſprings of chriſtian activity to work; ſweetens the moſt difficult and ſelf-denying duties of religion, and is that which only can make men eminent, uſeful and diligent chriſtians.

14. True chriſtian hope, may be diſtinguiſhed from *carnal confidence* and *preſumption*, chiefly by its *quickening* and *purifying* effects. "He who hath this hope "in him, purifieth himſelf as GOD is pure." If we believe the many great and precious promiſes of the goſpel, and are cauſed to hope for their accompliſhment, "We ſhall cleanſe ourſelves from all filthineſs both of fleſh and ſpirit, and perfect holineſs in the fear of GOD." When a man's hopes do not purify his ſoul, nor make him diligent in his chriſtian duty, but leave him wicked, careleſs and ſlothful, it may be depended on, that they are mere groundleſs

* *Matth. v.*

preſumptions; thoſe hopes of the hypocrite which periſh. The chriſtian hope is a *lively hope;* the inward ſpring of fervent deſires, reviving joys and zealous endeavors. The man who has got a believing view of the high prize of glory, preſſes on towards it, with unremitting diligence, and purifies *himself*, becauſe he knows none but the *pure in heart* will receive it, or can enjoy it.

15. The chriſtian hope tends to *purify, cleanse* and *sanctify* all who have it, in various ways; as, (1.) By the objects of it, which are the *pure* and *holy* GOD, and a ſtate of *pure* and holy *blessedness*. Indeed, none but ſuch as are in ſome meaſure purified from their luſts and ſins, can entertain or pleaſe themſelves with ſuch a hope at all: Whence it follows, that no wicked perſon ever *had* or *can* have a *true christian hope*. (2.) Thoſe who have this hope are purified by the frequent and ſerious thoughts of GOD, and heavenly glory. As the object of their hope is ſpiritual and divine; ſo the frequent contemplation of it purifies and raiſes their affections from the earth, and transforms them into the ſame likeneſs: As the chriſtian's hope, treaſure and heart are in heaven, ſo it is likely his converſation will be there alſo.

16. Every man will have his hope; but it behoves us to ſee to it that *our's* is rationally founded, and a true chriſtian hope,

that will attend us to death, and to the gates of heaven.—If it purifies our hearts, and quickens our holy diligence, it will never deceive us; but if not, it is counterfeit; and, "what will become of the hope of the "hypocrite, when GOD taketh away his "soul?"

17. How great will their fall be, who fall from a conceited and imaginary heaven into a real hell? Hope, of all the paſſions, is the moſt calm and quiet; but when diſappointed, the rage, impatience, ſorrow and deſpair of hell muſt follow. Let us therefore examine our hopes, leaſt this ſhould be *our* ſad caſe.

ESSAY XLIV.

The NATURES *and* PERSON *of* CHRIST.

1. AS Chriſt is the *end of the law*, the *ſum* and *ſubſtance of the goſpel*; the *pearl of great price*; the *author*, *finiſher* and *object of our faith*, *truſt*, *hope* and *dependance*; our Redeemer, and through GOD, our *portion* and *ſalvation*, it well becomes us, as chriſtians, to grow in the knowledge of, and acquaint ourſelves well with this glorious perſon: For, the better we know him in his *natures*, *perſon* and

saving offices, the more clear and comfortable will be the grounds of our faith and truſt in him; the better ſhall we love him, and the more cheerfully ſhall we follow and obey him.

2. He is, indeed, a moſt *wonderful* and *myſterious* perſon; but the holy ſcriptures have revealed to us a number of his glories and given us many rich materials for the growing knowledge of him, and acquaintance with him. 3. He is repreſented in one view, as the *wonderful counſellor*, the *mighty* GOD, the *everlaſting Father*, the *Prince of peace*; the Word which was in the beginning with GOD, and which was GOD; the Creator of all things, viſible and inviſible, by whom all things *are* and *conſiſt*: —And, in another view, he is repreſented as the *Son of man*; the *man Jeſus*; *born of a virgin*; appearing in the *form of a ſervant*, and in the *likeneſs of ſinful fleſh*; *ſmitten*, *wounded* and *bruiſed*, a *man of ſorrows* and acquainted with *grief*; *hungering*, *thirſting*, *weary*, *ſorrowing*, *bleeding* and *dying*; *made of woman*; made *under the law*, and the like;—which plainly proves, that in this myſterious perſon, there are *two* widely different and diſtinct *natures*; not only a *ſoul* and a *body*, as in other human creatures, but a truly *divine* and *human nature*; by the one of which

he is *truly* and *really* GOD, and by the other *truly* and *really man*.

4. Some heretics ſuppoſed, that the divine nature of Chriſt ſerved as a *ſoul* to his *human body*, and therefore, that he had no human ſoul, diſtinct from his *God-head*, or divine nature: but this is an error againſt ſcripture, which aſſures us, that Chriſt had a *true human ſoul*, diſtinct from his divine nature, and that this ſoul was ſorrowful even to death. Now it would be impious to ſuppoſe, that the *God-head* or *divine nature* of Chriſt, *ſuffered*, or felt any uneaſy paſſion. Beſides, unleſs Chriſt had had a proper human ſoul beſides his divine nature, as we have, he could not be *truly* and *properly man*, as we are; and therefore not a proper *Kinſman-Redeemer*.

5. Chriſtians are divided about the time of the creation of Chriſt's human ſoul: The generality holding that it was created and joined to his body in the virgin's womb. But others, with *Dr.* WATTS, hold, that it was created the firſt of all creatures; and that the divine nature of Chriſt, acting by it, created all other worlds and creatures; converſed with *Adam* in *paradiſe;* was made viſible to the *Patriarchs*, and was the grand agent in tranſacting all the affairs of man's redemption in all ages of the world; and really deſcended from heaven, diveſted

of the glory and happineſs it had there enjoyed from the beginning, and humbled itſelf, by entering into the virgin's womb.*

6. Theſe *two different natures* are ſo cloſely united as to make *one glorious, myſterious person;* by which means Chriſt's wonderful humiliation and condeſcenſion appears in uniting his glorious divine nature to our *mean* and *frail humanity;* and his wonderful love, in exalting *our nature* to a perſonal union with the *Deity*:—Yet theſe two natures do, and muſt continue *distinct, unblended* and *unmixed.* By virtue of this wonderful union, the man Jeſus is ſpoken of as GOD, and the *divine word,* which is GOD, is ſpoken of as *man.*

7. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt *was,* and *is* poſſeſſed of a truly divine nature, or that he is *truly* and *really* GOD in one of his natures, appears againſt *Socinians* and *Arrians,* from the works that he did; the divine names and attributes aſcribed to him, and the divine perfections which were diſplayed in his miracles. As we heard above, he is expreſsly called GOD: "the bright-"neſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs "image of his perſon:" He is ſaid to have been *in the beginning,* that is *eternal;* to have been *before Abraham was;* to have *created* and *made all things.* He is ſtiled

* Col. i. 15—18.

the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and the end; the ſearcher of the hearts and trier of the reins of the children of men. He is *omnipotent*, for he *raised the dead; turned water into wine; created bread and fiſh* in the eaters' hands, and *made all things*, viſible and inviſible. He is *omniſcient*, for he *knew the very thoughts* of men. He is *omnipreſent*, for although in heaven, he promiſes to be *wherever two or three of his diſciples are;* and to be every where with his ſervants to the end of the world. He is therefore the *proper object of divine worſhip*, and accordingly *all the angels of* GOD, are commanded to *worſhip him.*—*Stephen* worſhipped him; *St. Paul* ſwore by him, and all ſinners are commanded to believe in him, to rely and truſt on him, and to honor him, even as they honor the Father; therefore he is, in one of his natures, *properly* GOD*.

8. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt was alſo truly man, is evident, not only from his *conception* and *birth*, and from his being called *the ſeed of the woman*, the *Son of David*, the *man Jeſus*, and a *man of ſorrows* and acquainted with grief; but alſo from every proper character of humanity appearing in him. He *increaſed in knowledge*, and *in ſtature*, as other men; he

* Heb. i. Iſa. ix. 6. Col. ii. 9. Rev. i. 8.——ii. 23.——iv. 11.——v. 11, &c.

eat, drank and *slept;* was *hungry* and *weary*; felt all the innocent passions of humanity in all their strength and delicacy; spoke familiarly of his soul and body, his flesh and blood; suffered, and at length bled and died;—thus giving full proof, that in one of his natures, he was, in all respects, like unto his human brethren (sin only excepted) and therefore well qualified to be a *merciful high-priest*, and *compassionate elder brother*, and *Kinsman-Redeemer;* the *seed of the woman*, and the *Son of David*, after the flesh.

9. As the human nature of Christ was to be the *propitiatory sacrifice* for the sins of the world; therefore it behoved to be perfectly pure and immaculate, without any taint of *inherent* or *derived* corruption (otherwise it could not have been a sacrifice acceptable to GOD, nor available for us;) therefore, it pleased GOD to secure the sinless purity of this nature, by its being conceived and formed by the holy Ghost, in the sanctified womb of a pure virgin. Whence he was called the *holy child Jesus;* the *lamb of* GOD, "without spot or "blemish; holy, harmless, undefiled, and "separate from sinners."

10. There is no reason to doubt but that the *human soul* of Christ was the *noblest spirit* which GOD ever created, and his bo-

dy the moſt perfect human body that ever was formed; ſeeing, that in this *conſecrated temple* the DEITY himſelf was to reſide, and "all the fulneſs of the *God-head*, to dwell bodily." So that there is no doubt but this glorious dignified man, conſidered only as a man, *was*, and *is* the *moſt glorious creature of* GOD; and is filled with all the graces and perfections, whereof a limited, created nature is capable; ſeing that it was *by* and *through this nature*, that GOD was to diſplay and manifeſt himſelf to men.

11. As the divine nature of Chriſt was not capable of *ſuffering*, ſo neither was it capable of *humiliation*, *exaltation* or *reward*. CHRIST's divine nature could not properly be ſaid to humble itſelf; to empty itſelf of its glory, or to be rewarded for its ſervices, or exalted to a higher degree of glory, or bleſſedneſs, or dominion, than it enjoyed before; therefore, wherever we find theſe changes of ſtate aſcribed to Chriſt in ſcripture, we muſt underſtand it of his human nature, which indeed humbled itſelf in the work of our redemption, and has obtained a glorious exaltation and an increaſe of dignity and bleſſedneſs, as the reward of its humiliation, labors and ſufferings.*

12. Although there was a perfect union of the *Word* or *divine nature* of Chriſt with

* Philip. ii. 5,—11. Pſal. cx. 7, &c.

his human nature, while upon earth; yet the manner and degree in which the divine nature communicated the perfections of power and knowledge to human nature, is, to us, a great myſtery. It appears, that Chriſt, as a man, grew up from his childhood, and increaſed in knowledge as other men do: Yet, no ſooner does he enter upon his public miniſtry, having been thereunto ſet apart by the baptiſm of *John*, and the anointing of the holy Ghoſt, but we find him poſſeſſed of *amazing*, even *infinite knowledge* and *almighty power*. From which it would ſeem to appear, that during his private life, the divine nature of Chriſt communicated little elſe to his human nature, than ſanctifying knowledge and holy influences, and that his communications became more unlimited and extenſive, as the great work of his miniſtry required.

13. Such is the *glorious object* of our *faith* and *hope*. From which appears, how worthy he is of, and how juſtly entitled to our *truſt*, *homage*, *love* and *adoration*; for, whatever is amiable, excellent, or a perfection in GOD and *man*, he poſſeſſes in the moſt eminent degree. The offices which he ſuſtains and executes, as our Mediator, are to be conſidered below.

ESSAY XLV.

CHRIST *our* PROPHET.

1. ALTHOUGH Chriſt is, in one of his natures, GOD *equal with the Father*, yet in his complex perſon, as *God-man-Mediator*, he is the *Father's righteous ſervant*, whom GOD hath provided, appointed, ſanctified and ſent into the world, on the great and gracious errand of redeeming loſt ſinners; fulfilling and honoring his law, and promoting his glory; to whom he hath (for a time at leaſt) entruſted the whole management of his mediatorial kingdom; committed all power and judgment, and made him the head and governor of all things, of all the ſcenes of providence, all the kingdoms of the world, and all the angels of heaven and devils of hell, of which he is the glorious king and head.

2. In this his *myſterious, complex perſon*, as *God-man-Mediator*, he more eſpecially ſuſtains and executes three offices for the good of the church, and for the ſalvation of ſinners:—As ſinners are naturally *ignorant* and blind in the knowledge of GOD, and in the way of ſerving him acceptably, in compaſſion and relief of this miſery of our fallen race, he is become our *prophet* to inſtruct

us:—As they are *guilty* and ſubject to condemnation and wrath, and have no acceſs to GOD or power with him; in this our guilty and rebellious ſtate, he is become our *Priest* to atone for our ſins, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and to plead, pray and intercede for us with his juſtly offended Father, and to procure us acceſs to him with humble boldneſs and favorable acceptance with him:—As we are by nature bond ſlaves of *Satan* and of luſt, having numberleſs enemies which ſeek our perdition, and neither power nor ſkill to oppoſe them, he is graciouſly become our *King*, not only to give laws to our conſciences, but to captivate our hearts to himſelf; to rule and reign within us by the power of his Spirit, and having thus reſcued us from the power of inward enemies, to lead us on to the conqueſt of the world and the *devil*, with all their ſtratagems and temptations.

3. The *prophetic office* conſiſts chiefly of two parts: 1. To reveal, preach, and inculcate thoſe truths and doctrines of GOD, which are neceſſary to the ſalvation of ſinners: And, 2. To foretel, with certainty, future events, relative to the church of GOD, or the members of it, or others, which ſeemed to depend, for their exiſtence, on uncertain contingencies and events. This was the twofold buſineſs of both the Jewiſh

and *christian* prophets; and in the Jewiſh church, there were certain eſtabliſhed marks of trial, whereby the *true* prophets were diſtinguiſhed from the *false*. Now, in both theſe reſpects, Chriſt is the *prime* and *chief* prophet of the church; nay, he may be ſaid, by way of eminence, to be the *only true* prophet of GOD; becauſe all other true prophets were only his *organs* or *inſtruments*, (if I may ſo ſpeak) deriving all their *revelations*, *predictions*, *gifts* and *graces*, from the light of his Spirit, communicated to them, illuminating, *inſpiring* them, and ſpeaking and writing *by* and *in* them.

4. Whatever revelations, or divine inſpirations, *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Abraham*, *Job*, *David*, or the prophets and the patriarchs of old, were favored with, or have recorded in the ſcriptures, for illuminating, converting and building up the church;—or, if any heathens of old, *Socrates*, *Heraclitus* or any of the heathens at this day, have obtained, or do obtain, any *juſt* and *ſpiritual* revelations of GOD or his will, or any *ſupernatural light* or *aſſiſtance*, all has proceeded from the *Mediator* that fountain of light and grace; that *light of the Gentiles* and *glory of his people Iſrael*;—that *true light* which lighteth every man, that cometh into the world;—who, having been *from* eternity in the boſom of the Father,

and having learned of him, declareth him to his creatures;—for none hath *thus* known the Father, but the *Son;* the *word* and *wisdom* of GOD, and him to whom the Son revealeth him. In particular, we are aſſured, that 'all ſcripture is given by inſpiration of GOD;' and that the prophets ſpake in old time, as they were moved by the holy Ghoſt, which is the Spirit of Jeſus.

5. Although the Mediator was *thus* the Prophet of GOD in all ages; yet he was more *visibly*, *sensibly* and *solemnly* inaugurated and ſet apart to his prophetic office, at his baptiſm by *John*, where, inſtead of being anointed with oil (a ceremony uſed of old at the inſtalment of *prophets* as well as of *priests* and *kings*) he was anointed with a plentiful effuſion of the holy Ghoſt, with which he was filled without meaſure; and all men commanded to hear him, under that character, by a voice from heaven: which ſeems a ſurpriſing, literal fulfilment of *Moses's* propheſy concerning him.*

6. It may be obſerved, that Chriſt, in the courſe of his miniſtry, remarkably fulfilled and diſcharged the two branches of the prophetic office, mentioned above: 1. He revealed the will of GOD to men for their ſalvation; and, 2. He foretold future events.

* *Deut. xviii 15, &c.*

7. In the firſt of these branches, Chriſt the Mediator, reveals the will of GOD to men, for their ſalvation, both by his *word outwardly*, and by *his ſpirit* applying the word to their hearts. In this reſpect, how far has he the pre-eminence above all other prophets? Other prophets can only declare GOD's will to men, from the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, and after this have no more that they can do, not being able to diſpenſe the quickening Spirit, without which the outward declaration of GOD's will, is ineffectual to the ſalvation of ſinners: But this divine Prophet is not only the original *revealer* and *declarer* of GOD's *will*, but alſo the *dispenser of the Spirit*, by which he can, when he pleaſes, reveal GOD's will inwardly to the hearts and conſciences of ſinners, and make it operative and effectual there for their ſalvation.

8. By his perſonal miniſtry, and that of his apoſtles, he as the Father's righteous ſervant, has revealed all truth and duty neceſſary to the ſalvation of ſinners. He expreſsly declares, that what he ſpoke and taught was *from the Father*, and not of *his own will*.* He unfolded and caſt a new light on the dark prophetic parts of the old Teſtament, and ſhewed how all the propheſies and ſacrifices thereſhadowed forth, prefigured and pointed to *himself* and *gos-*

* *John xii. 49.*

pel blassings, as the *substance*.* He made those things clear to us, which were not well understood by the prophets who revealed them, by the secret impulses of his Spirit.† He declared the spiritual nature of GOD, and that worship he requires, and vindicated the *purity*, *spirituality*, and *vast extent* of the divine law, from the false glosses, and corrupt interpretations of the Jewish teachers.‡ He distinctly revealed the way and method of our recovery through himself; gave a clear revelation of a judgment to come, and of an eternal state of rewards and punishments; thus bringing life and immortality to such a clear light by his gospel, as it had never appeared in before, by former divine revelations.

9. As a Prophet, he foretold many future events, (which is deemed the highest proof of the prophetic spirit and character) such as *Peter's* denial of him; the treachery of *Judas*; his *own* sufferings, death, and resurrection; the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the dispersion of the Jews forty years before it happened:‖ The surprising success and spread of his own gospel:** The sufferings and persecutions of his followers, and the degeneracy and corruption which

* Luke xxiv. 27
† 1 Pet. i. 12.
‡ Matth. v. vi. and vii.
‖ Luke xii, 44.——xxi. 24.
** Mark xvi. 17, 18.

ſhould prevail among them. And, as all theſe things have punctually come to paſs, we have abundant ground to believe that the propheſies contained in the book of his revelations to his ſervant *John*, and thoſe propheſies, which by his Spirit, he enabled his other apoſtles to utter, concerning the fall of *Antichriſt;* the reſtoration of the *Jews;* the gathering in, and converſion of the heathen nations; the glory of his church in the latter days, and the final deſtruction of our earth by fire, will, all of them, be accompliſhed in due time.

10. Chriſt alſo as a Prophet, teaches not only by *outward revelations*, but by the *inward operations of the Spirit* on the ſouls of men. He not only ſpake as never man ſpoke; but his words (when he pleaſes) are *ſpirit* and *life;* working powerfully and effectually in them who believe. He opened the heart of *Lydia*, that ſhe attended to the things ſpoken by *Paul*. He opened the underſtandings of his diſciples, that they might underſtand the ſcriptures, and cauſed their hearts to burn within them, by the ſacred energy of his Spirit, while he opened to them the ſcriptures concerning himſelf. Thus does he, when he pleaſes, make the light of his glorious goſpel ſhine upon the hearts of ſinners: enlighten, transform, and renew them, and thereby give free courſe to the word of his

grace, and glorify it: And to him we are to look, as our Prophet, for thoſe *inward teachings*, and *effectual illuminations* of his Spirit, to make his word effectual and ſaving.

11. Chriſt the Mediator was foretold by *Moſes*, as a Prophet, like unto himſelf, to be raiſed up, to the Jews, from among their brethren, to whom they ſhould hearken without gainſaying or reſerve. And the reſemblance between HIM and *Moſes* is remarkably ſtriking in many reſpects: (1.) In their birth; they were both *Iſraelites;* both born in obſcurity: (2.) In their early expoſure to great *risks*, *dangers*, and *hardships*: (3.) Both come to *their own* with ſpecial commiſſion and miraculous power from GOD, and their own received them not kindly, but evilly requited them, and perverſly rebelled againſt them: (4.) Both were exceedingly meek in their temper; expoſed themſelves to much hardſhip and ſelf-denial in their miniſtry; were zealous, diligent and faithful in all GOD's houſe: ſhewed great ſigns and wrought great miracles to confirm their miſſion: (5.) Both were authors of a new diſpenſation of religion, and Mediators between GOD and *man:* (6.) Both had near acceſs to, and familiar converſe with GOD, and peculiar marks of his favor; and had their revelations immediately from GOD,

and confirmed them with the ſeal of miracles: (7.) Both faſted forty days: (8.) Both were very zealous for the LORD GOD of *hosts*, and affectionate lovers of an ungrateful people: (9.) Both were *rulers* and *deliverers*, as well as *prophets*; the one from the captivity of *Pharaoh* and the bondage of *Egypt*; the other from the captivity of the *devil*, and the bondage of their own luſts: (10.) Both choſe *seventy disciples*.

12. Let us ſee to it, that we *hearken to this Prophet*, which ſpeaketh from heaven. Let us hear with ſubmiſſive attention, both what he ſpeaks to us *outwardly* by his word, and *inwardly* by the voice of his Spirit.*

ESSAY XLVI.

The PRIESTLY OFFICE *of* CHRIST.

1. THE Aaronical prieſthood, was a type of the prieſthood of Chriſt, though the prieſthood of *Melchisedec*, was a more perfect one: Conſequently, the Jewiſh high-prieſts, and *Melchisedec*, were types of Chriſt.

2. Two qualifications were neceſſary to the Jewiſh high-prieſts; (1.) That they ſhould be of the ſame nature with their

* *Acts* iii. 23. Heb. xii. 25. Matth. xvii. 5. Heb. i. 1.

brethren.*—(2.) That they ſhould be ſolemnly ſeparated and ſet apart to their office, by the appointment of GOD, and by conſecration or inveſture.† Now Chriſt, the great high-prieſt of our profeſſion, had both theſe qualifications.‡

3. As the prieſt's office, is founded on the fallen ſtate of human nature, and appointed in relief of the guilty, it conſiſts of two parts or branches: (1.) To offer ſacrifice: And, (2.) To make interceſſion.

4. Sacrifices were of two kinds under the law: Either *eucharistical*, as acknowledgments of mercies; and theſe were commonly called *gifts*, and were *unbloody*, conſiſting of the fruits of the earth, &c. Or, they were *expiatory*, or *atonements* for ſin, and theſe were called *sacrifices*, and were always *bloody*; for, without ſhedding of blood, there was no remiſſion of ſins.

5. Chriſt, in this ſenſe, was a *true* and *real sacrifice*. His ſoul was made *an offering for ſin*. Thus he is called, "The "Lamb of GOD which taketh away the "ſins of the world:—Our paſſover ſacrificed "ed for us:—The Lamb ſlain from the "foundation of the world:—The propitiation for our ſins and the ſins of the world: "—He has offered to bear the ſins of many."‖

* Heb. v. 1, 2——iv. 15. † Heb. v. 1,—4.
‡ Heb. ii. 14.—17.——v. 5, 6, 9. 10.
‖ Heb. ii. 12, 26.

6. The entire human nature of Chriſt was the ſacrifice which he offered up for the ſins of the world.—He not only gave his *ſoul* or *life* an offering for ſin, but bore our ſins in his own body on the tree:—And this ſacrifice received its dignity and value from his *divine nature*, which offered the human: For he, through the eternal Spirit, offered himſelf up without ſpot unto GOD.*

7. By this ſacrifice has Chriſt made an atonement for ſin; ſatisfied the demands of divine juſtice; confirmed and illuſtrated the truth, holineſs and juſtice of GOD, and made his law exceeding honorable; purchaſed our forfeited bleſſings and loſt happineſs; opened a way for the mercy of GOD to all the ſinful race of *Adam*; and procured the pardon of ſin, the divine favor, the gift of the Spirit, and eternal life for every ſoul of man who will fall in with his ſaving deſign, and take him as their *prophet* and *king*.†

8. The interceſſory part of the prieſt's office, was to offer up the prayers of the people and to intercede for them. The high-prieſt entered into the holieſt of all on the great day of atonement or expiation, and bleſſed the people in the name of the

* Heb. ii. 14.

† 1 John i. 7. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Gal i. 4. Heb. ix. 12,—15. 1 *John ii.* 1. 2. Numb. vi. 23. Deut. xxi. 5.

Lord; ſprinkling the blood of their ſacrifices before the mercy-ſeat. Chriſt, in like manner, having offered himſelf a ſacrifice of atonement for our ſins, hath entered into heaven, in the virtue of his moſt precious blood, to offer up the prayers of his people, and make interceſſion for them.*

9. As Chriſt was of the tribe of *Judah*, not of *Levi*, from whom the Aaronical prieſthood, deſcended, ſo he is ſaid to be a "Prieſt for ever after the order of Melchiſedec." The reſemblance between the prieſthood of Chriſt and that of *Melchiſedec* is remarkable in ſeveral caſes: 1. In the antiquity of that order, and *Abraham's* paying tithes to *Melchiſedec*, and being bleſſed by him, although the father of the Aaronical prieſthood. 2. *Melchiſedec* was a *priest upon a throne*, or a *king* as well as a *priest*; ſo was Chriſt. 3. The original and deſcent of *Melchiſedec* was peculiar;† ſo was Chriſt's: For, who can declare his generation? 4. The prieſthood of *Melchiſedec* was not encumbered with ſuch a *ritual*, and ſo many ceremonies and carnal commandments and ordinances, as that of *Aaron*; but was more ſimple and catholic; ſo is Chriſt's.

10. There are ſeveral things in the prieſthood of Chriſt peculiar to itſelf; as, 1. He

* Heb. ix. 11;—24. Rom. viii. 34. Heb. vii. 25.
† Heb. vii. 3.

was perfectly ſinleſs, although he tranſacted with GOD for ſinners. 2. Other prieſts offered *brutal ſacrifices*, but Chriſt offered *himſelf*. He was both the *priest* and the *ſacrifice*. His divine nature was the altar on which he offered up the humanity. 3. Other prieſts offered *many ſacrifices*, even *daily*; whereas he offered but *one ſacrifice* of infinite value and virtue. 4. Other prieſts and ſacrifices, were ineffectual for expiating or taking away *moral guilt*: They made not him who did the ſervice, or for whom it was done, *perfect* as pertaining to the *conſcience*: They only took away the guilt of ceremonial pollutions or omiſſions: But the ſacrifice of Chriſt takes away the guilt of all ſin. This is "the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the ſin of the world."

11. The prieſthood of Chriſt, and his moſt expenſive ſacrifice, ſhould put us in mind of our guilty ſtate, and of the malignant nature of ſin; ſeeing there could have been no remiſſion of the very ſmalleſt ſin, without the ſhedding of the blood of Chriſt.

12. Hence we ſee the wonderful love of GOD in preparing *ſuch a Prieſt* and *ſacrifice*, for our guilty race, and not ſparing him, but freely giving him up for us all:—As alſo the amazing condeſcenſion and philanthrophy of Chriſt, in becoming a ſacrifice and victim for the *ungodly*; for *ſinners*; for *enemies*.

13. How *freely*, *cheerfully*, and *assuredly* ſhould we depend on the merit of ſuch a ſacrifice as this? And how entirely give ourſelves over to the guidance of ſuch an high-prieſt? How ſhould we reverence him? And with what humble confidence enter into, and approach the holieſt, in the new and living way which he hath conſecrated by his blood? How *compaſſionate* and *faithful* is he? How ſenſible of our infirmities, and how ready to pity them, and able to help them or remove them?

14. What encouragement have we to *faith* and *prayer*, having ſuch an interceſſor? Our prayers are *poor* and *imperfect* things, but if offered up *by him*, they will *prevail* and be *accepted*. How happy alſo are all thoſe, for whom he *intercedes?* They muſt be ſafe and happy; for GOD ever hears his beloved Son: "But "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail "not." Happy *Peter!* and equally happy and ſafe all for whom Chriſt intercedes!*

ESSAY XLVII.

The KINGLY *or* REGAL OFFICE *of* CHRIST.

1. KING is a *relative term*, and ſuppoſes *ſubjects* and a *kingdom*. Chriſt's

* *Heb. x. 19,—26.*

kingdom is two-fold; either *natural*, founded in his eternal DEITY and GODHEAD; or *mediatorial*, given to him of the Father by commiſſion.*

2. The ſubjects of king Jeſus are, either his *friends* or his enemies. All were indeed, at firſt his enemies; but many are made willing ſubjects in the day of his power; and thoſe that continue enemies, ſhall be broken to pieces with a rod of iron.

3. In conſidering thoſe whom he ſubdues, and the kingly power he exerciſes over them both in ſubduing and ruling them, the following things may be obſerved: 1. All are at firſt of *ſatan's kingdom; children of wrath;* they *ſerve divers luſts*, and walk according to the courſe of this world, often indeed, they meet with checks of conſcience; make reſolutions; ſeem inclinable to ſubmit to his government, and ſay, "I go, ſir—but go not;" the love of ſin ſtill prevailing and rendering them children of diſobedience.—2. Chriſt gives them to underſtand, that they are rebels, and that if they perſiſt they muſt inevitably periſh.†—3. He makes a proclamation of mercy and pardon to them if they return and ſubmit; both by his word and Spirit.‡ 4. He ſhews them by his word and by his

* Pſal. ii. 6. Iſa. ix. 6, 7. Dan. vii. 13, 14.
† *Job ix.* 4. Luke xiii. 3.——xix. 27.
‡ *John vi.* 37. Rev. iii. 20, 21.

Spirit, that it is both their *duty* and *interest* to submit to him as their rightful Lord and Sovereign; and that in vain they expect the benefits of his *priestly office*, if they submit not to him as *a king*.*—(5.) He convinces them of the infinite advantage resulting to them from an entire subjection to his laws and government; That they shall be pardoned;—received into favor;—made kings and priests to GOD;—kept from falling; and presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.—(6.) He gives them the laws of his kingdom;—shews them the duties they must perform, and the sins they must watch against; that they must be *diligent*,—*zealous*,—*fervent* and *persevering*; that they must wait upon him, and not draw back by apostacy. And, (7.) He holds out both the *crown* and the *cross*: He shews them what they may expect to *lose* and *suffer* in his service; that they must be willing to part with, and forego all things for the crown of glory in reversion; that they must be willing to deny themselves; to be hated of all men, and to lose life itself in his cause and in fidelity to him.

4. When sinners become the subjects of Christ, they cast themselves at his feet,—not desiring to capitulate or stand on terms; but give him (as a victorious prince) a *blank*

* Psal. xlv. 11, &c.

paper to make his own terms; reſolved, cheerfully and without reſerve, to ſubſcribe them. And this ſubjection is accompanied with the greateſt love to, and deſire after Chriſt,—his *person* and *service*, as well as his *rewards*; with a conſent to be the Lord's to all intents and purpoſes,—both to *serve*, to *ſuffer for*, and to *enjoy* him. It is accompanied with a firm reliance and dependance on him, for all needed grace and help to fulfil their duties and obligations; —with reſolutions of a perpetual and unremitting warfare againſt all his enemies; and with zealous endeavors to promote the intereſts of his kingdom, and gather ſubjects to it.

5. After the ſubjection of ſinners to Chriſt, he rules him *in love*; gives them needed ſuccors and comforts in his ſervice; —corrects them for their ſins;—ſupports them under temptations and ſufferings;— helps them to conquer their enemies, and leads them on to triumph and a crown.

6. In his government of enemies, he ſets bounds to their power, malice and wickedneſs; he turns the evil deſigned by them, into good; and in the end, he will exerciſe kingly power and authority over them, in taking vengeance on all that have continued incorrigible.

Laſtly, Chriſt hath exerciſed his kingly office in all ages of the world and church;

but he will ſhew it more glorioufly in the latter days, when the world will be full of his dutiful ſubjects.

ESSAY XLVIII.

The due IMPROVEMENT *of* TIME.

WHEN we ſhall have conſidered the ſhortneſs of time; its vaſt importance, and pointed out the beſt methods of redeeming and improving it, we ſhall have exhauſted this ſubject.

1. The ſhortneſs of time, both *abſolutely* and *relatively* conſidered, is ſo very obvious to perſons who are the leaſt capable of reflection and obſervation, that little need be ſaid of it: For, 1. How ſmall a thing is the aggregate of time, making one total ſum of all its diſtinctive periods, from the firſt birth of created things, to the final diſſolution of this world and the preſent ſcene, and till time ſhall be computed no more? A few thouſands of fleeting years will ſum it all. Yet a little while, and the mighty angel ſhall lift up his hand to heaven, and ſwear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that *time ſhall be no more.* 2. If we conſider time as *relative to us*, or the *meaſure of our duration;* what a *ſpan*, what an *hand-breadth*, what a *cypher* is it? How quickly are our years gone, as a tale that is

told? A *day*, how quickly is it gone; and yet how few are the days of the years of our lives? That mighty thing a *year*, which looks ſo large and extenſive before us, how ſwiftly does it paſs, and how ſhort and trifling does it look in retroſpect? Yet how few are the years of moſt lives?—How quickly does a clock tell a *ſecond?* While we pronounce the word, it is expired! Yet a ſhort row of figures in *ſeconds*, makes the ſum of a long life. When we ſee the heap of ſand in the upper lobe of an *hour-glass*, and mark how ſlow it waſtes, by running into the lower; we are apt to ſay, ſurely this will be long in expending; yet within the ſhort compaſs of an hour, all is fallen! Juſt ſuch is the life of man. Look forward upon fifty or ſixty years, it ſeems an immenſe heap of time; but the flattering tranſient minutes quickly run it out and bring it to a period. 3. How comparatively ſmall is the peried of moſt human lives?—It is ſuppoſed, that not every tenth perſon reaches the age of thirty years. The two thirds of our ſpecies die in infancy, and theſe are happy! But from that age up, in which all are moral agents, and accountable for their actions, how many graves do we find of every length? How many die of every age? The thread of time, [ſhort at the very longeſt] is *ſuddenly*, and alas! *unexpectedly* cut off, and they drop into *their* graves, like unripe fruit.

2. The neceſſity of improving time, will appear not only from the *ſhortneſs of its duration*, but from its *vaſt importance*.—1. Time is our *only opportunity* both for *doing* and *receiving good*, as *accountable creatures*. *Opportunity* is abſolutely neceſſary to the accompliſhment of every great and good deſign. If we had all the *will* and all the *power* in the world, to do good for ourſelves or others; yet without opportunity, we can do nothing. The being that never exiſted, (if ſuch an *ideal being* is fairly ſuppoſable) could never have any capacity or opportunity, either of enjoying or communicating good. The being which exiſts but a ſhort time, though it may have the nobleſt capacities for doing and receiving good, yet *its opportunity* is only *as its time*. It is owing to the infinite goodneſs of GOD, that he ever created any being at all, or gave unto them capacities and opportunity of giving and enjoying good. The ſimple exiſtence of every living creature which GOD, hath made, is an intentional favor and mercy to that creature; for, to *exiſt*, is to be in a capacity for happineſs. It is better even for *ants* and the moſt *trifling insects to be*, than *not to be*; for, even their ſhort and inſignificant duration, is filled with a happineſs ſuitable to their nature. But, where *ſenſe*, *reaſon* and *immortality* are ſuperadded, to ſuch beings,

the intentional goodneſs of GOD, is even infinitely greater; becauſe, to ſuch beings, GOD hath not only given nobler capacities of communicating and receiving a higher and more ſublime happineſs, but hath alſo given them an opportunity of enjoying this happineſs, eternally! O, then, under what high obligations are *men*, are *human creatures*, to GOD, even for his creating goodneſs, who hath taught them more than the beaſts of the field, made them wiſer than the fowls of heaven, ſtampt upon their nature the image of his own immortality, and made them capable of eternally enjoying the *chief good?* But, 2. We muſt conſider that the *only opportunity* which we have of enſuring the eternal enjoyment of the chief good of our natures, is our *preſent, ſcanty, uncertain ſpan of time.* When the curtain of time falls, all opportunity ceaſes of either *doing* or *receiving* that good, which will be eternal in its fruits, conſequences and rewards: For, when the night of death cometh, no man can work the rewardable works of GOD; there is no knowledge, device or repentance in the grave. The reaſon is, becauſe we are probationary creatures, and our preſent precarious exiſtence, is the only time of our trial. Hence it appears, how *all-important* time is to us, as our *eternal all* depends on the manner *in which* we improve our ſhort allotment

of it. It is our ſeed time for eternity. It is our working, laboring day, wherein we are to lay up in ſtore a good foundation for the time to come. It is our only opportunity of providing for, and enſuring a bleſſed immortality. 3. Hence it will follow, that as this is the talent which gives worth to all other talents, every day or hour of it abuſed, or not uſed in ſubſerviency to our eternal intereſts, though it may not totally deprive us of *eternal happiness itself*, yet it will certainly leſſen the *degree of that happiness*. He who, with *one pound* gained *ten*, was made ruler over *ten cities*; and he who gained but *two*, was made ruler only over *two* cities. A plain proof, that a vigorous improvement of *this*, and every other talent, will be proportionably rewarded; and that the more ſlothful and idle ſervant (though he may not be altogether unfaithful) will fall ſhort of the reward which he might have obtained by diligence and circumſpection.

3. As to the beſt methods of *redeeming* and *improving* time, the following may be worthy our attention: 1. An habitual daily conſideration of, and attention to the great importance of it, as it ſtands connected with our eternal intereſts.

2. Daily ſerious reflection on its *exceeding shortness* and *uncertainty*, and how quickly our day of probation may be at an

end. And this will naturally lead us,

3. To conſider the greatneſs of the work we have to do in this our day, and how dreadful the conſequences will be to us, if we ſhould leave it unfiniſhed.

4. Moſt will find it worth their ſerious enquiry, whether they have ever, to this day, conſidered for what purpoſe they have had *time*, and been ſent into this world; and whether they are not yet to learn the very meaning of the *improvement of time*.

5. Perſons who have a due ſenſe of the importance and value of time, will employ as little of it as poſſible in *abſolute idleneſs*; or, which is the ſame thing, in buſying themſelves in matters, which contribute nothing to their own advantage, or that of other perſons, much leſs in miſchief.

6. Time employed in worldly buſineſs and cares, is not always *miſpent*, or *thrown away*; for, while we have bodies, families, and the poor and needy to care for, lawful worldly induſtry, will ever be an eſſential part of our chriſtian duty. But that the time ſpent in worldly buſineſs be *lawfully ſpent*, it is neceſſary that we thus ſpend it in ſubſerviency to a higher, nobler end; that we do it to the glory of GOD, and in obedience to his command, and that the world is kept down from the higheſt place in our affections.

7. All time ſpent in diverſions and amuſements is not loſt or ſquandered; for, it is needful, that the mind be unbent and the ſpirits refreſhed, in order to fit both for more important duty. But diverſions ſhould never exceed this meaſure. A perſon who is running for a rich prize, ſhould not ſtop and turn aſide to cath butterflies.

8. Where perſons are conſcious, that they have trifled away the prime of life in *idleness*, *diſſipation*, and *pleaſure*, and in a wretched unconcern about their higheſt intereſts, it becomes them to be more frugal and parſimonious of time than others; —*firſt*, becauſe much of it is already guiltily ſquandered and loſt, and in all probability little remains;—and, *ſecondly*, becauſe they have peculiar need to redeem their time by a double diligence in well doing, that, if poſſible, they may make ſome amends for former trifling.

9. A right *contrivance* and *planning* of buſineſs, would be an excellent expedient for the better improvement of time:—So much of every day to the duties of religion; —to the improvement of the mind;—to worldly cares and labours;---to company; ----diverſion, &c.

10. Diligence and *diſpatch* in buſineſs, is abſolutely neceſſary to make the beſt of time.

ESSAY XLIX.

The CONSIDERATION *of* ETERNITY.

1. ETERNITY, what a *vast*, *amazing*, *unfathomable*, *incomprehensible* ſubject! It is the *existence* and *duration* of him, who is incomprehenſible to all but himſelf!---As we quickly loſe all our ideas in conſidering *immensity*, or *infinite space*; ---ſo we are equally loſt in conſidering *eternity*, or *infinite duration*; and no wonder, ſince they are in ſome ſort attributes of the incomprehenſible JEHOVAH, which none by ſearching can find out unto perfection!

2. The word *aion*, which we Engliſh *eternity*, ſignifies *perpetual existence*; and ſince we are finite creatures, it is little wonder, that we ſhould be incapable of forming any adequate conception of it: For, it is not to be ſuppoſed, that a being who has *begun to exist*, ſhould be able to conceive the nature of a being, who is *self-existent*, and never had a beginning of exiſtence.

3. Eternity is generally diſtinguiſhed into two periods [if one may be allowed ſo to expreſs it;] the *first*, is the eternity of duration which *is past*, and which can be attributed only to GOD, who alone poſſeſſes it *all*: The *second*, is that eternity of dura-

tion which flows on endleſs from any given period of time. This laſt eternity is not peculiar to GOD, but is attributed alſo to all immortal creatures, ſuch as *angels*, *men* and *devils;* who, though they have begun to exiſt, yet never ſhall ceaſe to be.

4. This laſt eternity, I mean the eternity of creatures, is not *necessary* like the duration of GOD's exiſtence; but wholly depending on the *power* and *will of* GOD, who has been pleaſed to form ſome of his creatures, for an exiſtence co-eval with himſelf, *i. e.* to *will* and *cause* their duration to be *eternal.*

5. How wonderful a being is *that* GOD, who is eternal in his duration, and immenſely unlimited in his exiſtence! His *duration* and his *being* admit of no limits, and therefore admit of no kind of compariſon with the *existence* or *duration* of any created being.

6. How entirely are we dependent on GOD, from whoſe *necessary existence*, we have borrowed our *limited existence;* and by the very power of whoſe will, we continue to exiſt every moment?

7. Though *absolute eternity* belongs only to GOD, yet as we ſhare in all that eternity which is before us, and muſt be happy or miſerable through this endleſs duration, according as we ſpend our preſent time; it follows that we ſhall live here be-

low, with a conſtant habitual view and regard to our eternal exiſtence and duration.

8. This will enable us upon all occaſions to form a proper eſtimate of things. For, if any *temporary* or *momentary* pleaſures, honors or gains, which would rob us of eternal happineſs, ſhould ſolicit our attention or purſuit, they ought, at all events, to be forborne and rejected.---And if any *temporary* ſufferings or ſelf-denials, which are neceſſary to our eternal happineſs, ſhould fall in our way, they ſhould at all adventures, be endured rather than we ſhould run the riſk of ſuffering eternal torments: For, whatever of joy or pain is *temporary*, bears proportion to that which is *eternal*. And it is a maxim of eternal reaſon, that leſſer inconveniences ought always to be preferred to greater; and that to *ſell eternal happiness* for the pleaſures of a *moment*, yea, of *ten millions of years*, argues deſperate folly.

ESSAY L.

The DUTY *of* MASTERS *of* FAMILIES.

MASTERS of families are pretty univerſally allowed to ſuſtain the offices of *prophets*, *priests*, and *kings* in their *own* families, and if we borrow our ideas *of the number* and importance of the duties

they owe to their families, from the ſuſtaining *these three offices*, their duty, in this relation, will appear very weighty and important indeed.

1. It is the buſineſs of a *prophet* to *inſtruct;* it is therefore the buſineſs of maſters of families, to inſtruct their families, not only in the maxims of prudential wiſdom, but more eſpecially in the doctrines and duties of religion.

2. It will not excuſe parents in the neglect of this duty, that they are *ignorant* themſelves. They ought to *learn* and get knowledge for this very purpoſe. And there are few, but if they take due pains, may acquire knowledge enough, to give *good*, *wholesome* and *necessary* inſtructions to their houſeholds.

3. Ignorant and unlearned parents ſhould be the more conſcientious in providing proper inſtructors for their families.

4. Parents may inſtruct their families very uſefully and effectually by ſetting before them blameleſs, virtuous and religious examples; and the beſt inſtructions without this, will be very *ineffectual*, if not pernicious.

5. If it is the duty of *kings* to give good laws, and to preſerve good order among their ſubjects; maſters of families are obliged to do this in their families.

6. The orders and regulations of maſters of families, in their families, ſhould not be more numerous than is neceſſary, leſt they be neglected or forgotten through the multiplicity of them; and their neceſſity ſhould be *made apparent*, that they may be enforced with firmneſs and reſolution.

7. In the government of a family (a ſociety often made up of perſons of very different tempers and diſpoſitions) great prudence, ſkill and attention are needful, and above all, the divine counſel and aſſiſtance.

8. It appears to be of ill conſequence for the ruler of a family, to give way to the petulency or unreaſonable humors of a capricious domeſtic; as this would be implicitly giving up his prerogative, and foſtering ill humors, and rebellious, lawleſs diſpoſitions in the ſubject. It belongs to chriſtian prudence to determine when this rule ought to be diſpenſed with, in order to prevent greater evils.

9. *Lenity*, *compassion* and *mercy*, ſhould be tempered with *firmness*, *steadiness* and *resolution*, in him, who would govern a family well. Tyranny in little domeſtic ſocieties, is odious; and too much lenity may produce great evils.

10. Bodily *punishment* ſhould be the laſt expedient uſed to reform or correct a domeſtic offender; and prudence alone can point out the proper time and place for this.

11. The good example of a king is equally binding with his laws, and far more encouraging and alluring; ſo it is in the maſter of a family.

12. The chief duties of a *priest*, are *sacrifice* and *intercession*. This points out the obligation of *prayer*, as a duty incumbent on all maſters of families, in their own families.

13. Chriſtian maſters of families who neglect this duty *habitually*, act worſe than the heathens did, who daily offered prayers and ſacrifices to their *gods*.

14. If *family prayer* and *instruction* are duties incumbent on all chriſtian maſters of families, which they indiſpenſibly owe to GOD, and to the ſouls of their children and other domeſtics; and if the *morning* and *evening* are the proper ſeaſons pointed out for the profitable performance of this duty; then the maſters of families who, for ordinary, or very often, ſpend their mornings and evenings abroad from their families, are not in the way of their chriſtian duty, and their families do probably loſe more by this abſence and neglect, than they can gain by the cares and worldly labors of the day.

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ESSAY LI.

How CHRISTIANS *may and ought to resist* TEMPTATIONS, *and make them turn out to the* BENEFIT *of themselves and others.*

1. AS we are, by nature, and by the prevailing influence of evil example, exceeding prone to ſin; and as temptations to it are ſcattered thick in our way, ſo to reſiſt temptations to evil, is certainly the moſt *important* and *difficult* part of our chriſtian duty and warfare.

2. The difficulty of our reſiſting a temptation, is in proportion to our natural or habitual proneneſs to the particular ſin to which we are tempted, and the ſtrength or weakneſs of our virtue or grace, taken together.

3. A perſon who has been, by *nature* and *cuſtom*, and may ſtill be by *conſtitution*, exceeding prone to ſome particular ſin; yet, by improvement in virtue and ſtrength of grace, may much more eaſily reſiſt a temptation to that particular ſin, than another perſon of weaker grace and feebler virtue, who is, and has been naturally and conſtitutionally leſs inclined to that ſin.

4. Some very vicious and wicked perſons, have little inclination to ſome certain *ſins*, and therefore are in leſs danger of be-

ing tempted to commit them than others of much better diſpoſitions upon the whole; yet whoſe unhappineſs it is, to be natually prone to thoſe ſins, and eaſily drawn into them.

5. Worldly-minded, *covetous* perſons, are not eaſily tempted to the ſins of idleneſs, gaming, ſquandering or luxury, and but ſeldom have any ſtrong propenſity to carnal, ſenſual indulgencies, or the ſins of the fleſh; becauſe, all theſe oppoſe and tend to deſtroy their ruling paſſion, which is the love and purſuit of gain. But they are prone to the ſins of lying for gain, of cheating, over-reaching, injuſtice, uſury, cruelty, oppreſſion, and immoderate worldly cares, hazards and toils; and againſt theſe their ſtrongeſt watch and guard ſhould be placed: For, it is but a vain and empty boaſt, for a covetous man to ſay, 'I am no gameſter, 'prodigal, or ſpendthrift; no careleſs, ſloth-'ful man.' The world knows he is not, cannot be ſuch, in conſiſtence with his ruling paſſion; and that care, diligence and frugality in him, are only miniſters and hand-maids of his capital vice.

6. *Angry*, *envious*, *malicious*, *revengeful* perſons; as alſo, *vain*, *boasting*, *ambitious* men, are ſeldom prone to the ſins of the fleſh, or the ſoft, ſocial, effeminate vices. This is not the complexion of their nature, or the caſt of their corruption.

Their ruling paſſion leads them to other objects, and renders them an eaſy prey to a different ſet of temptations. Therefore it is little virtue in them, to be free from a ſet of ſins, to which they have naturally ſo little propenſity.

7. Thoſe who are extremely addicted to the ſins of the fleſh, are often free from the ſins of *pride*, *vanity*, *ambition*, *malice*, *covetousness* and *revenge*;—not becauſe they are *virtuous*, but becauſe they have no ſtrong bias towards theſe ſins, and becauſe the current of their corruptions hurries them another way, and leads them to different objects. It would therefore be an empty boaſt in *such a person*, to ſay, 'I am juſt in 'my commercial dealings, eaſy in my tem-'per, affable in my deportment, kind, cha-'ritable, and good natured to all,'—becauſe the oppoſite ſins do not claſh or interfere with his *ruling passion*.

8. The *first* rule for reſiſting temptations, is to be perfectly acquainted with our *ruling passion*, and our ſtrongeſt propenſities to vice;—or in the more nervous language of ſcripture, *To know every man*, the *plague of his own heart*; the ſin which does *most easily beset him*; his *bosom sin*, his *beloved lust*. Every man has ſome ſinful paſſion or propenſity which *predominates* above the reſt. And to *know* this ſin, is to *have* diſcovered our greateſt enemy, and *our* greateſt weakneſs.

The *second* rule is, to ſet the ſtrongeſt guard upon the weakeſt avenue of our ſoul, and againſt our moſt powerful enemy.

The *third* rule is, to hold no deliberate parley with this prevailing luſt, nor ever to ſpare or give it quarter, when it makes its aſſaults, however artfully.

The *fourth* rule is, to ſhun thoſe thoughts, companies and amuſements, which we have found by experience, to prove fuel to the ſins which moſt eaſily beſet us.

The *fifth* rule is, to pray and ſtrive in a ſpecial manner againſt theſe particular ſins.

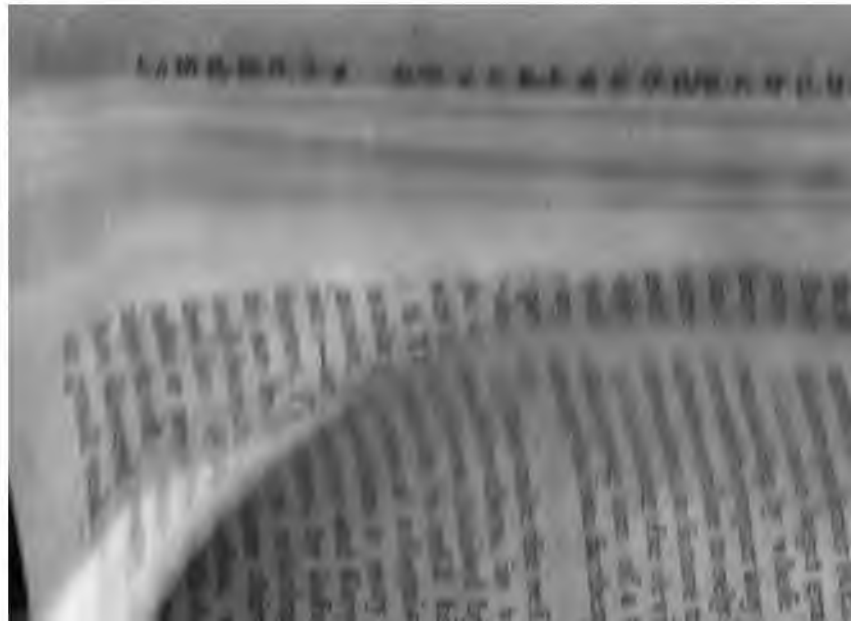
The *ſixth* rule is, to conſider the danger of falling under the power of theſe enemies, and the difficulty of recovering. To all theſe may be added, a

Seventh prudential maxim, namely, to keep ourſelves diligently employed in ſome honeſt calling or buſineſs, which is a very powerful preſervative againſt temptation, as it cuts off thoſe occaſions and opportunities which miniſter to it.

9. Temptations may turn to the advantage of thoſe who reſiſt them many ways:

1. As conqueſt over them is a proof of grace, and ground of joy.

2. As every conqueſt of this kind ſtrengthens the habit of virtue; gives courage and magnanimity to the ſoul, and renders future victories over the ſame enemy more eaſy.



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ESSAY LII.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

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3. As it renders thoſe who have thus conquered, the better qualified to adviſe and ſuccor thoſe that are tempted, and gives them a better right to do ſo.

4. As it ſhews us experimentally the power put into our hands to conquer other temptations, and tends to humble and give us remorſe for not having availed ourſelves of this power upon former occaſions.

5. As it tends to beget gratitude in us towards that Being, by whoſe grace alone we are enabled to conquer any temptation; and teaches us *on whom* to rely, and *whence* to draw our ſuccors, in future trials. And,

6. As it is beating the devil in the field of battle, depriving him of a triumph, and diſcouraging him from farther attempts upon us.

10. We may make the reſiſting of temptations uſeful to others, in various ways: As, (1.) If we are ſolicited by any particular perſon to ſin, to reſiſt his ſolicitation, may be a means of reforming him. (2.) On ſome occaſions it may be lawful and uſeful to encourage and ſupport the tottering virtue of others, by informing them of our ſucceſs; or by relating it under the fictitious name of ſome third perſon: As, 'I have known a perſon, who was thus 'tempted, and thus reſiſted.' (3.) If the temptation is of *a public kind*, he who reſiſts it, preaches a loud ſermon againſt vice;

and it is much if ſome one or more, in company, are not benefitted by it. (4.) If none for the preſent are bettered by ſuch a public teſtimony againſt vice, yet it muſt leave the guilty, under ſuch a conviction of the power and merit of virtue, as may ſome time or other prevail.

ESSAY LII.

PUBLIC SPIRIT.

1. PUBLIC *ſpirit* is a *generoſity of temper*, ariſing from the principle of univerſal benevolence, and is directly oppoſed to a *narrow*, *ſelfiſh*, *contracted* temper, which ſeeks only its own private intereſts, pleaſure and advantage.

2. A truly public ſpirited perſon, does not, indeed, neglect himſelf as an individual, nor his family, as parts of himſelf; but he does not live for himſelf or his family alone; his generous heart deviſeth liberal things, and takes pleaſure in forming ſchemes and projects for the good of mankind, with whoſe intereſt he feels his own intereſt to be cloſely and inſeparably connected. On the contrary, a *ſelfiſh perſon*, deſtitute of the virtue of public ſpirit, has his eye chiefly fixed on that dear idol *himſelf* (of which he conſiders his family as a part.) All his ſchemes and projects termi-

nate there, and he takes little or no pleaſure in any advantage, or honor, but what comes in to this dear idol.

3. Whatever promotes the public honor or good; whatever ſcheme *brings* or *offers* benefit to one's country, or tends to promote its credit and reputation among ſtrangers, gives a peculiar pleaſure to the public ſpirited perſon, and he is ready to encourage, ſupport and aſſiſt it, to the utmoſt of his power. If he has not the talent of projecting ſuch ſchemes himſelf, he readily falls in with them when propoſed, and is ſo far from needing to be prompted to join in them, that he rejoices in having an opportunity of *doing public good*, which is his favorite ruling paſſion. And if he can do but little himſelf in gratifying ſo benevolent a paſſion, he labors to encourage others, who are better able. On the contrary, the *ſelfiſh man*, has a thouſand prudential reaſons againſt conſenting to a ſcheme which might coſt him ſomething: 'It will 'beggar the public; it will oppreſs the 'poor; it is impracticable; or it will never 'anſwer the end propoſed.'—If he is outvoted by a majority, he conſents with reluctance, and is for bringing the terms of expenſe as low as poſſible, always having an eye to *ſelf*.—If for ſhame he is obliged to contribute, the heſitating manner in which he does it, or the boaſts he makes of it,

give plain evidence that he did it unwillingly.—If the ſcheme miſcarries, or does not anſwer the intention, he reproaches andabuſes the projectors, and makes this an argument againſt all future public ſpirited projects.

4. A truly public ſpirited perſon has a real, ſenſible pleaſure in the proſperity and ſucceſs of his neighbors, and heartily feels for their adverſity and ill fortune. It would give his generous benevolent heart a refined pleaſure to ſee all proſperous, all rich, all healthy, all happy, all honored and eſteemed:—And when he ſees the reverſe, he *feels* for the calamity of his neighbors, and is himſelf the leſs happy amidſt his own health, honor, ſucceſs, and abundance. On the contrary, the *ſelfiſh man* has an *unfeeling heart* towards his neighbor.—Is he happy and proſperous himſelf? He hugs and bleſſes himſelf in his good fortune: He ſacrifices to his own net, and burns incenſe to his own dreg. He imputes it to his own induſtry, diligence, honeſty or integrity, and has no pity for his neighbor's misfortunes, which, according to him, are all owing to ſome neglect or miſconduct on his part. In ſhort, he *feels only for himſelf*, unaffected either with hearty joy or grief for the good or bad fortune of others.

5. The public ſpirit of a place may be pretty certainly inferred, from the monu-

ments of it in that place. Do we ſee in a nation or in a neighborhood, *learning*, *arts* and *ſciences* encouraged and flouriſhing; rich and ſtately churches; charity foundations for educating the poor, and healing the ſick; the public roads in good repair and the like; it may be depended on, that public ſpirit prevails in ſuch places.—On the contrary, where *public works* and *public charities* are neglected in places, otherwiſe rich and opulent, and where private property abounds, it may be depended on, that *there a ſelfiſh ſpirit* and *narrow, contracted principle prevail.*

6. Public ſpirit was cultivated and cheriſhed with the greateſt care amongſt the ancient *Romans*, and had wonderful effects in *that commonwealth.* It ſeems now to prevail much in *Great Britain* and the *Britiſh colonies.* Wherever *true learning* and *noble ſentiments of liberty* prevail, it flouriſhes. Under the contrary circumſtances, it is *ſtarved* and *periſhes.* It is at a low ebb among theſe Iſlands, a few only excepted.

7. Public ſpirit is a *ſhining* and *uſeful* virtue: (1.) It is the offſpring of univerſal charity and benevolence. (2.) It is the brighteſt reſemblance of GOD and his *bleſſed Son.* (3.) It is the certain mark of a *brave, enlarged, benevolent* ſoul. (4.) It is the *parent* of *noble, generous* and *uſeful* actions.

And therefore, (5.) It is the ſource of the trueſt and moſt refined delight and pleaſure to thoſe who are poſſeſſed of it.

8. The Apoſtles of Chriſt, and thoſe of their ſucceſſors who propagated the goſpel in foreign nations, at the expence of every thing dear and comfortable in nature, gave proof of the higheſt and nobleſt public ſpiritedneſs.

9. Next to theſe, thoſe who charitably contribute to the propagation of the goſpel, ſtand foremoſt in the catalogue of the public ſpirited.

10. The Chriſtian religion lays down the fineſt and *noblest rules*, and the *strongest motives* for public ſpirit; and indeed, a ſelfiſh man cannot be a true Chriſtian.

11. Selfiſhneſs is the moſt deſpicable of all human vices.

ESSAY LIII.

A proper TEMPER *and* CONDUCT *towards* ENEMIES.

1. OUR bleſſed Saviour has laid down an expreſs precept to his diſciples which *states* and *limits* their duties towards enemies: "But I ſay unto you love "your enemies, bleſs them that curſe you "do good to them that hate you, and pray

"for them which deſpitefully uſe you, and "perſecute you," Matth. v. 44. He hath alſo enforced this precept, by giving the higheſt example of obedience to it, in his own conduct. Yet there is no precept of the goſpel, the equity of which has been more diſputed than this, and the impoſſibility of obedience to it, more ſtiffly and publicly aſſerted.

2. The reaſon of the great reluctance of men's minds againſt this precept, ſeems to be this, that malice and revenge are the moſt radical parts of the *devil's* image remaining in the minds of men, through their apoſtacy and the corruption of their nature; and *these* together with *mistaken notions of self-preservation*, and *immoderate self-love*, diſpoſed men to imagine, that to love an enemy is *impossible*, and to hate him is *just*.

3. But when we ſpeak of the duty of *loving enemies* we muſt carefully diſtinguiſh between the love of *approbation* and *esteem*, and the love of *benevolence* or *goodwill*. As to the *former*, we cannot have it for the one who does not appear amiable to our underſtanding, even to a child;—but the latter we owe, and ought to pay to all men. A parent for inſtance, is far from approving a *stubborn*, *refractory*, *immoral* child; yet ſtill his love of benevolence and good will, *ſhould* continue in its full force and effica-

cy. "GOD hateth the workers of iniquity, "and is angry with the wicked every day:" He cannot therefore love them with a love of *esteem* and *complacency;* yet is he *good* and *kind* to the *evil* and *unthankful;* and with ſuch a love of benevolence and beneficence did he love this *ſinful inimical* world, as to give his only begotton Son to it, "that whoſoever believeth on him might "not periſh, but have everlaſting life."* Chriſt could not ſurely love with eſteem and complacency the inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, who killed and ſtoned the prophets, and were then plotting againſt his own life without a cauſe: Yet how warmly does he expreſs his love of benevolence and beneficence to them, and even prays for his own murderers.†

4. The *extent* and *degree* of the duties of benevolence and beneficence, either to friends or enemies, is various, according to *merit*, *circumſtances*, or *relation*. The general ſcripture rule is, "To do good to "all:"—The reſtriction is, *to ſome more than to others*, according to a variety of circumſtances and conſiderations.—A good maxim in this caſe, is, to prefer *compaſſion to an enemy*, before a matter of mere *generoſity to a friend*, when we cannot exerciſe both together.

* Matth. v. 45. John iii. 16.
† Matth. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 41, 42,——xxiii. 24.

5. Neither reaſon nor ſcripture requires any acts of kindneſs to our enemy, which are evidently prejudicial to our own intereſt, or which might give him an advantage over us.

6. We ſhould *forgive* and *do good* to enemies, after the example of GOD and *his Son.**

7. We ſhould forgive them, and conſequently do them good, as it is the neceſſary condition of our forgiveneſs from GOD.†

8. By forgiving and doing good to our enemy, we heap coals of fire upon his head, and take the moſt effectual method of recovering and ſecuring his friendſhip, from the moſt winning and engaging motives.

ESSAY LIV.

TEMPTATIONS *arising from* COMPANY.

1. IT is generally allowed, that we take in moſt temptations by the ear, or by the ſenſe of hearing; and if ſo, we are expoſed to numberleſs temptations in company: eſpecially, if we conſider, that the eye comes in, in aid of the ear, and often helps on theſe temptations.

2. This is occaſioned by the univerſal corruption and degeneracy of human nature,

* Rom. v. 6,—10. 1 John iv. 10.

† *Matth. vi. 12, 14, 15.*——xviii. 21, 35. Mark xi *25, 26.* Luke vi. 37.——xxiii. 34.

and by the conſequent carnal, earthly, impure nature of the paſſions and affections, and the ungovernable licentiouſneſs of the tongue which is actuated by thoſe inward irregular and impure movements of the ſoul. Human ſociety, in its preſent ſtate, may be compared to a *Hospital*, where all are weak and diſeaſed, and where, by a ſpreading contagion, every one more or leſs infects another, and increaſes his weakneſs and diſorder: ſo, that every member of it, is more or leſs infected and contaminated by others. No two can aſſociate together, who are in a ſtate of perfect health and ſoundneſs.

3. Upon the whole, the *wiser* and *more virtuous* our company is, the leſs will we be expoſed to temptations of any kind;—and it may happen, that in many occaſional interviews with wiſe and virtuous perſons, all may, upon the whole, be made better. — This effect might be expected from religious ſocieties and conferences, were they rightly conducted.—But we now chiefly mean, the *common* and *occasional* interviews of mankind with each other, at *entertainments*, *complimental visits*, *parties of pleasure*, *accidental* or *occasional rendezvous*, and the like, to which we are ſaid to reſort *for the sake of company*.

4. One of the firſt temptations ariſing from company, which we ſhall mention, is

to *error*. It is ſcarce poſſible to ſpend an hour in any company where *religion*, *morality*, or matters of *human prudence* are the topics, but ſome pernicious *error* is broached and maintained by ſome, and imbibed and embraced by others. *False maxims* are ſo exceeding common in the world, and ſo univerſally eſpouſed, and adhered to by the multitude, that it is ſcarce poſſible to ſtear clear of them in any company; and many of them ſeem, at firſt ſight, ſo plauſible, as well as recommended by general practice, that the weak and inconſiderate readily ſwallow them, and he muſt be a reſolute perſon indeed, who will dare to controvert them:—For inſtance,—'That 'it is lawful to hate and perſecute our ene'my, and take private revenge. That a 'man is to ſtudy his own eaſe, pleaſure and 'intereſt, and the like.'—Theſe errors, tho' they may ſeem at firſt ſight of little conſequence, yet lead men to the moſt pernicious and immoral practices, and confirm them in them.

5. Company tempts to *levity*. In the gaiety of converſation we are often led inſenſibly away from that ſobriety and temperance of mind (if we may ſo ſpeak) which always becomes creatures in our circumſtances. *Puns*, *flaſhes of wit*, *humor*, and a thouſand hints ſtarted in almoſt every mixed company, *intoxicate* and *inebriate*

the mind, and render it *volatile* and *unguarded*. And this is moſt commonly the caſe, where *good nature* prevails, and *good cheer* abounds; where the minds of all are opened by mutual love and good cheer, and under no reſtraint or reſerve. Perſons in this ſituation are often ſo far hurried off their guard, as to violate the laws of good morals, either by bearing too hard upon the weakneſs or good nature of ſome perſon in company; by expoſing or ridiculing ſome abſent perſon, or by ſmutty jeſts and double *entendres*, offenſive to the modeſt ear, and prejudicial to all. And when theſe come alſo to be aided by *immodest looks*, or *gestures*, and ſo, to poiſon the *eye*, as well as the *ear*,—morality muſt receive a dangerous wound, and corruption be propagated.

6. Company tempts to *profanity*. It is very ſeldom that matters of religion are converſed of in company with *that decency* and *discretion* which becomes ſuch ſubjects. Scripture is often quoted with a *levity* and *indiscretion*, which betrays a great irreverence for it. The great doctrines of religion are diſputed and controverted, with an angry warmth, or a flippant lightneſs, which tends to diſcredit them both in our own minds, and in the minds of others. The names of GOD and CHRIST, *heaven* and *hell*, *salvation* and *damnation*, are bandied about as the meereſt trifles. Diſreſpectful and

unbelieving hints are often uttered, in the heat of paſſion and diſcontent, againſt doctrines or duties, which we do not like, and which croſs the grain of our corrupt nature: All which tend to deſtroy our reverence for holy things, and eraze the very foundations of practical ſerioufneſs and piety.

7. We do not now ſpeak of thoſe companies and ſocieties where *profanity* and *irreligion* are the profeſſed topics of converſation: nor of thoſe ſchools of debauchery and ſenſuality, where perſons meet for the purpoſes of *drunkenness* and *lewdness*. At ſuch places perſons ſeek temptations, and not temptations perſons. But we ſpeak of thoſe *social meetings*, which are deemed *innocent*, *diverting*, and even *improving*, and of the temptations there to be met with, and guarded againſt.

8. Company tempts to a ſinful miſpenſe of time, in idle and unprofitable diſcourſe. The danger of company would be ſtill leſs than it is, if the converſation could be confined to ſomething *rational* and *profitable* of any kind, though it did not turn much on matters of morality or religion;—ſuch as *history*, *geography*, the *laws and customs of nations*, the *improvement of trade*, *husbandry*, *navigation*, and the other *arts and ſciences*: But to the ſcandal of moſt companies, the converſation generally turns upon *mere nonſenſical bagatelles*; degen-

erates into *empty chit chat* upon the verieſt trifles, where the hearers have a chance to learn nothing but the moſt impertinent nonſenſe, and where the ſpeakers muſt run into the ſame inſipid nonſenſe, if they would be heard. *Thus*, much precious time is often thrown away in *those idle words*, for which men muſt give a ſerious account at the laſt day;—that fooliſh talking and jeſting which is not convenient, by which guilt is contracted, and a habit of trifling acquired.

9. *Backbiting calumny* and *detraction*, are other temptations frequently met with in company. It is of the nature of human corruption, that it drives men from one extreme to another. If companies are not betrayed into the *social* and *good-natured vices* of *levity*, *diſſipation*, and *intemperate gaiety*; or ſunk into the *ſwiniſh vices of debauchery*, *drunkenness* and *lewdness*; or carried away by *impiety* and *profanity*;—they are too generally engaged in the dirty work of *calumny* and *detraction*. The foibles and weakneſſes of abſent perſons, are put in the moſt ridiculous light, and their perſons expoſed to contempt;—or their failings are criticiſed and magnified, and their characters maliciouſly torn to pieces. And while appeals are every moment made to you for the *truth* and *juſtice* of theſe ſlanders, you are put to the ſad neceſſity,

either of quarrelling for your abſent friend—or, which is far more common, of hearing him traduced in ſilence, and perhaps, through a weak complaiſance, joining iſſue with the ſlanderer, and granting things to the disadvantage of an innocent, injured perſon, which your conſcience does not approve.

10. The beſt methods of ſhunning the temptations ariſing from company, are, (1.) For ordinary to frequent and aſſociate with the beſt companies: For, man being a ſocial creature, cannot well be wholly without company.—(2.) When we accidentally or on buſineſs fall into company of a worſe kind, to endeavor as far as our influence will reach, to give the converſation a profitable, or, at leaſt, an innocent turn and direction.—(3.) Where we cannot do this, to be on our guard againſt unworthy compliances, and to diſcountenance, as far as we can, trifling, profanity and immorality.—(4.) If we find ourſelves unable to do this, and that we are in danger of ſinful compliances, to make our ſtay as ſhort as poſſible.—(5.) To make reflections after retiring, on the temptations we have met with, and to fortify our minds againſt future dangers of the ſame kind.—(6.) To ſhun, if poſſible, for the future, thoſe companies, or kinds of company, in which we have met with temptations too ſtrong for our virtue and *reſolution*: And, (7.) which ought to have

been mentioned *first*, To aim our prayers and endeavors againſt the temptations of ſociety, and eſpecially of thoſe companies, which, by the nature of our ſituation or buſineſs in life, we are obliged moſt commonly to frequent.

11. Solitude, and a ſequeſtered retirement, as we ſhall ſee anon, is no ſecurity againſt temptations; and man a ſociable creature, could never be deſigned for it.

ESSAY LV.

TEMPTATIONS *arising from* SOLITUDE.

1. ALTHOUGH a ſocial life, or a life ſpent in company, has its ſnares and dangers, yet it has its advantages too; and the ſociety of our fellow-creatures, well conducted, may contribute greatly to our improvement in virtue and happineſs. How many noble and uſeful hints are often ſtarted in converſation, which we would have labored for in vain in the way of private meditation? How many motives to virtue, and diſſuaſives againſt vice? How often has a tottering reſolution been ſupported and ſtrengthened by a ſingle word; by a ſingle look or frown?

2. Nor need we imagine, that we can flee from the danger of temptation, by ſhunning the ſociety of our fellow-creatures;

for, there are a number of temptations which ſeem almoſt peculiar to *ſolitude*, and which will purſue us to the moſt remote and hidden receſſes.

3. As GOD hath made man a *ſocial creature*, and endowed him with *ſocial bents*, it appears he is chiefly deſigned for a *ſocial, active* life, to give aſſiſtance to, and receive aſſiſtance from his fellow-creatures; and therefore, that it is not the duty of men to ſeek and affect ſolitude and retirement, unleſs it be occaſionally, for the purpoſes of meditation, ſelf-examination, extraordinary prayer and devotion.

4. If it be the intention of GOD, that men ſhould live in ſociety, and employ their ſocial powers and talents for the purpoſes of devotion; we may well ſuppoſe that a *monkiſh, recluse* life, is againſt the intention of GOD, and that he may juſtly give over men to ſtrong temptations, who thus affect a kind of life, ſo contrary to the end and deſign of their being.

5. It has been obſerved, that the firſt *hermits* and *recluses*, did greatly corrupt chriſtianity; and that the monks and nuns of later ages, have been, generally ſpeaking, a very wicked kind of people, infamous for many great vices: for, by binding themſelves up under ſolemn vows, to auſterities *which* GOD never enjoined, their corruptions have been the more outrageous and

they have been ſuffered to fall into the vileſt abominations.

6. It is remarkable, that the *devil* purſued our Saviour to a wilderneſs, where he thought he could more effectually ply his temptations againſt him, then in the ſociety of men. And the evil ſpirit, in the parable, who left the poſſeſſed man is ſaid to have wandered in *ſolitary* and *dry places*, where he conſorted with many other ſpirits. Nor is it unworthy of remark here, that if there is any truth in *witchcraft*, and the pranks and illuſions of evil ſpirits, they have generally prevailed in places *little frequented* and *thinly peopled*, and have fled places of concourſe in the ſociety of men.

7. Solitude often tempts men to ſins, thro' the advantage of ſecrecy, which they would be aſhamed to practice in human ſociety.

8. Solitude naturally generates melancholy, and clouds the mind with gloomy thoughts; thereby darkening and ſpoiling the judgment.

9. Recluſes, as they have little ſociety with the world, and know little of the force of theſe temptations which accompany a ſocial life, ſo they are naturally prone to an over-rigid, uncharitable diſpoſition of mind, and cenſorious reflections on the actions and conduct of thoſe who are engaged in active, ſocial life.

10. The *devil*, ever vigilant and active

to ſeduce rational creatures, when he cannot get the advantage over them, by the temptations which ariſe from ſociety, often drives them into ſullen ſolitude; puts them out of temper with the world, and the proper duties of life, and there purſues them with *blaſphemous ſuggeſtions*, *unclean thoughts*, and *deſperate reſolutions*. And it has been generally obſerved, that thoſe whom he drives to *ſelf-murder*, have been long haters of ſociety, and lovers of ſolitude and retirement.

11. Upon the whole. To ſhun ſociety leſt we fall into temptation, is not only rank cowardice, but alſo very abſurd. There are proper times and occaſions when we ſhould ſeek ſolitude, and when retirement is both neceſſary and uſeful; but we ſhould conſider the proper duties of our ſtations as *men* and *Chriſtians*, and never fly ſociety when we have a chance of either doing or getting good by it.

ESSAY LVI.

How far CHRISTIANS *are obliged to recede from their proper Rights, and deny themselves some lawful Enjoyments and Amusements, out of Charity to their weak Brethren, and that they may not lay a Stumbling-block before them.*

1. CHRISTIANS, as ſuch, are not abridged of any *natural* or *acquired right* as *men* and *citizens;* nor does their religion forbid them any lawful and innocent enjoyment, or gratification of life, provided it does not fall directly in the way of ſome duty of religion, for which it ought to be denied for a time.*

2. Not only have Chriſtians *ſuch liberty in the* LORD, but it is often their duty to plead for, vindicate and aſſert this liberty, againſt thoſe who would diſpute or infringe it; even while, for prudential reaſons, or for conſcience ſake, they may ſee it expedient to recede from it, and give it up.

3. The Apoſtle, however, gives an important caution in this matter:† "But take "heed, leſt by any means, this liberty of "yours become a ſtumbling block to them "that are weak." It is certain, therefore, that this Chriſtian liberty of ours, may in

* 1 Cor. ix. 3,—7.
† 1 Cor. viii. 9

ſome inſtances, be uſed to very bad purpoſes; and things which are lawful in themſelves, are not lawful to *all men*, nor *at all times*,—but ought to be forborn, when, through the ignorance or weakneſs of our Chriſtian brother, they may be a means of offending him, or leading him into guilt. *St. Paul* ſpeaks of a *power* or *liberty* which he and the other Chriſtians had, to do many things, and yet adds,—"Nevertheleſs we "have not uſed this power, but ſuffer all "things, leſt we ſhould hinder the goſpel of "Chriſt."*

4. There are, it ſeems, ſome inſtances, wherein the uſe and exerciſe of our Chriſtian liberty, may *deſtroy* a *weak* and *ignorant brother*. *St. Paul*, ſpeaking of meats forbidden by the law of *Moſes*, declares the power and liberty which Chriſtians have to uſe them freely: "I know, ſays he, and "am perſuaded by the Lord Jeſus, that "there is nothing unclean of itſelf;"—yet he adds—"But if thy brother be "grieved with thy meat now walkeſt thou "not charitably.—Deſtroy not him with "thy meat for whom Chriſt died:—For, "through thy knowledge (of thy chriſtian "liberty, and uſe of it) ſhall the weak "brother periſh, for whom Chriſt died: "For, when we ſin ſo againſt the brethren, "and wound their weak conſcience, we ſin

* 1 Cor. ix. 12,

"againſt Chriſt.— Let no man put a ſtumb-
"ling-block, or an occaſion to fall, in his
"brother's way. It is good neither to
"eat fleſh, nor to drink wine, nor any
"thing whereby thy brother ſtumbleth, or
"is offended, or is made weak. But let
"us follow after the things which make
"for peace, and things wherewith one
"may edify another."*

5.—(1.) This chriſtian liberty of ours is never to be given up merely to pleaſe, humor, and gratify *some* at the expence of *others*. This was the cauſe of *Peter's* baſe diſſimulation, for which his brother *Paul* withſtood him to his face, and on account of which he declared, "that he walk-
"ed not uprightly according to the truth
"of the goſpel."†

6.—(2.) Our chriſtian liberty is by no means to be betrayed or given up, in order to eſcape perſecution. This treachery ſeems to have been the chief crime of the *Judaizing teachers*, who urged it upon the Gentile converts to be circumciſed, and who themſelves obſerved all the ceremonies of the Jewiſh law, that they might paſs for *Jews*, with the Jewiſh and Heathen perſecutors, under that pretext; and for which *St. Paul*, ſo ſeverely reproaches

* See Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii.
† See Gal. ii. 11,—14.

them and their followers.*—And indeed, all perſecution for religion, and among Chriſtians, is founded on ſome incroachment on chriſtian liberty,—or on impoſing ſome things on the conſcience inconſiſtent with it.

7.—(3.) Our Chriſtian liberty ſhould not be given up to meer peviſhneſs, humor and caprice. Many perſons who know, or ought to know the extent of chriſtian liberty, are yet ſo unreaſonable in their humors, or unhappy in their temper, that they will not allow to others the ſame innocent liberties which they allow to themſelves. Or, while they themſelves *swallow a camel*, they loſe all charity and temper with their brother, if he does not *ſtrain at a gnat.* Now, to endeavor to pleaſe ſuch perſons to their good unto edifying, is to aim at an impoſſibility. Caprice and contradictory humor can never be pleaſed, never be edified. Indeed, every attempt to pleaſe it, is to increaſe the diſorder, and to ſtrengthen its petulancy.

8. Our Chriſtian liberty ought to be vindicated and adhered to reſolutely, where the giving it up is like to be hurtful to the ſouls of men, and the intereſts of religion, by propagating *idolatry* and *superstition.* And in this case, perſons of the greateſt note and weight in the church, ſhould be

* See Gal. ii. 1,—6—iii. 1,—4.—v. 1,—13.

ready to ſuffer all things, rather than give it up by baſe compliance. This was *Archbishop Cranmer's* crime. Reformation in religion, and ſeparation from idolatrous and ſuperſtitious communities, can never be accompliſhed or juſtified, but on this principle. Upon this foundation is built the *protestant reformation*, and thoſe proteſtants who ſtill labor to reduce chriſtianity to its original and native ſimplicity, act very commendably on this principle, and will ever be had in eſteem by the proper judges and true friends of chriſtian liberty.

9. Chriſtian liberty, is in many caſes to be given up in compaſſion to the ignorance and inveterate prejudices of others, until this ignorance and theſe prejudices can be removed. The apoſtolic decree * was made on this account; and the Jewiſh converts were allowed to have their children circumciſed, and to abſtain from certain meats, and to obſerve certain legal ceremonies, until they would be better inſtructed in the principles of their chriſtian liberty: Whereas, the Gentile or Heathen converts were not indulged in theſe matters, as they had no inveterate prejudices of education in their favor. †

* Acts xv. 21.

† See the whole Epiſtle to the Galatians, compared with acts xvi. 1,—3.——xxi. 17,—28.

10. Our chriſtian liberty ought perhaps in many caſes to be given up in favor of *incurable weakness*, eſpecially where it is *general*. Suppoſe a whole neighborhood of weak chriſtians had got it in their heads, from the apoſtolic decree, that it was ſinful to eat blood, or things ſtrangled; or, from any other means were perſuaded, that it was an unpardonable crime to eat with unwaſhen hands, or to ſhave their heads or beards, or any other whimſy; it would perhaps become the duty of an intelligent chriſtian, living among them, and who could not reaſon them out of their ſuperſtition, to conform to theſe cuſtoms and uſages, leſt he might, by his example, induce ſome of theſe poor people to act againſt their conſciences, and ſo to contract guilt.

This is that giving up of chriſtian liberty which is plead for by *St. Paul.**

11. But if ſuch a community ſhould hold it ſinful to marry; or to worſhip God in public aſſemblies (as the *Familists* and *Brownists*); or to receive the ſacraments (as the *Quakers*;) or ſhould inſiſt on the neceſſity of doing ſomething *forbidden by* God, or of omitting ſomething commanded by him; in theſe caſes we ought not to comply, but inſiſt on our chriſtian liberty.

12. Many things which are ſimply lawful in themſelves, yet becauſe of the abuſes

* *Rom.* xiv. and 1 Cor. viii. and ix.

made of them, ought to be ſhunned and denied by chriſtians. There can be no moral evil in often viſiting a tavern, or a houſe of infamous report, ſuppoſing there is no ill deſign, or ill practice; nay, perhaps, it may be done with the beſt views and from the beſt motives: Yet, becauſe of the ſcandal that might attend this practice, it might be beſt to refrain it. I know not whether *card-playing* and *dancing* may not be perfectly innocent in themſelves; yet if theſe practices are generally abuſed, it were beſt to diſcountenance and refrain them.

13. The general rule ſeems to be this, that wherever the uſe of our chriſtian liberty, has a direct tendency to hurt the ſouls of others (unleſs in ſome capital point where it ought not, and cannot with ſafety be given up) it is beſt to forego it and recede from it; for our neighbour's good and edification is a charity we owe him. But, as all things may be abuſed to evil purpoſes, ſo may the lawful uſe of our chriſtian liberty. And after all, *prudence* and *discretion* muſt be the umpires in this matter.

ESSAY LVII.

What DIVERSIONS *are lawful, and the* WAY *to regulate them.*

1. THE beſt moraliſts have condemned ſome faſhionable diverſions, as un-

lawful in themſelves. Such are games of *hazard*, and ſucceſs in which depends in a great meaſure on *lottery*, ſuch as *cards*, *dice*, &c. &c.

2. If there are any other diverſions which are either directly ſinful in themſelves, or lead unavoidably to the corruption of manners, theſe are wholly out of the queſtion at preſent, as being in themſelves unlawful, and therefore forbidden to chriſtians; ſuch as rioting and drunkenneſs, chambering and wantonneſs, impure dalliances, laſciviouſneſs, effeminacy, &c.

3. Of *lawful diverſions*, ſome are calculated to exerciſe the body, and thoſe are beſt ſuited to ſedentary perſons, whoſe callings afford them too little exerciſe for the purpoſes of health; ſuch as *running*, *walking*, *leaping*, *fencing*, and all thoſe plays or diverſions which give motion and exerciſe to the body, and tend to circulate the blood, and promote digeſtion and perſpiration. Others are calculated to recreate and unbend the mind, ſuch are *chess*, and a number of others; and theſe ſeem beſt adapted for thoſe who live an active, laborious, fatiguing life.

4. The very words, *diverſions* and *amuſements*, point out the uſe and deſign of theſe paſtimes. They are only intended to unbend the mind, and refreſh the body and animal ſpirits, that thoſe who uſe them may

be the better fitted and qualified to diſcharge the ſerious, neceſſary and important buſineſſes of life; the care of the ſoul and of the body.

From this notion of *diversions*, *amuſements* or *recreations*, we may learn many important leſſons about the right choice, uſe and regulation of them. As,

(1.) It is evident, that a life ſpent in a continual, or almoſt perpetual round of diverſions, muſt be a *wicked*, *ill ſpent* life. This is wholly to miſemploy life, and neglect the proper buſineſs of it; and that too under the wicked notion, that it is innocent, proper and beneficial to do ſo.

(2.) If diverſion or amuſement may be properly conſidered as the *phyſic of life*, by which the diſorders of the body and mind, contracted by an intenſe application to the ſerious and proper buſineſs of it, are relieved and cured, and their vigor, ſprightlineſs and activity reſtored, for a freſh application: Then, to ſpend one's life in a perpetual round of diverſions, is as abſurd and prepoſterous, as though a perſon neglecting all food, ſhould live wholly upon phyſic, under a pretence of preſerving his health and vigor.

(3.) If habits are contracted by repeated acts; then a life ſpent in giddy diverſions and amuſements, muſt in courſe of time ſo relax and effeminate both the body and

ind, as to render them wholly unfit for ıy application to the ſerious and important uſineſſes of life; muſt beget an inveterate ıabit of the worſe kind of idleneſ- ınd, in fine, muſt turn perſons, thus de- ed to diverſions, into mere *whirligigs*, or *useless drones*, burdens and nuiſances ciety. A life of perpetual diverſion; life of perpetual intoxication; and per devoted to it, are generally the moſt uſeleſs and miſchievous members of ſociety. Witneſs perpetual dancers and gameſters.

(4.) When diverſions are turned into the conſtant buſineſs of life, they wholly change their nature, and loſe their good effects; they are ſo far from unbending the mind, that they become its only burden; they are ſo far from recreating and refreſhing the body, that they fatigue it, and exhauſt the animal ſpirits; they are ſo far from rendering the body vigorous, and the mind cheerful, that they injure the health and ſink the ſpirits. This is, with a witneſs, to make a toil of pleaſure; and to turn that cordial drop, which makes life's bitter draught go glibly down, into a *rank* and *deleterious poison.*

(5.) If the proper deſign of diverſions is, by refreſhing the body and recreating the mind, to render both more lively and vigorous, and thereby fit them for a more vigorous application to the proper, neceſſary

and important duties of life; then all ſuch diverſions and amuſements as evidently tend to hurt the body or the mind, and obſtruct the proper end of diverſions, muſt needs be unlawful and ſinful: And the ſame will hold true of lawful and innocent diverſions continued too long at a time. Altho' *gaming* were innocent in itſelf, yet it were extremely unlawful to ſpend whole weeks, night and day, in that diverſion, to the breaking of natural reſt, and thereby hurting both the body and mind, and to the neglect of all duties, civil, ſocial and religious. Altho' *dancing* may be innocent in itſelf, yet to ſpend whole nights in that exerciſe, to the fatiguing of the body, neglecting all the duties of the family and cloſet, and unfitting perſons for the proper buſineſs of the next day, is certainly criminal and unlawful.—For a poor man, whoſe family calls for all his time and labor to clothe and feed them, to ſpend *one day*, much more, *ſeveral days* in diverſions, is a ſin againſt *juſtice*, *charity* and *mercy*.

6. Diverſions which may be innocent and lawful to *ſome*, and in *certain circumſtances*, may be yet unlawful to *others*, and in certain *different circumſtances*. As, (1.) It may not be abſolutely unlawful in a Chriſtian, to amuſe himſelf by playing an *innocent game*, or playing on a *muſical inſtrument*, or *walking*, or *riding*, or perhaps

dancing;..yet to mix with *swearing*, *drinking* or *profane* company for the ſake of partaking in theſe amuſements, as it would be extremely *indecent*, ſo it would alſo be very *criminal;* as it would ſhow, that this *love of pleaſure* was ſuperior to his *averſion to vice* and *evil example;* and as his example in this particular inſtance, would look like giving a ſanction to the vices of his company.—(2.) To perſons who find, that by any particular diverſions and amuſements, they are ſtrongly tempted to ſin; ſuch *diverſions* or *amuſements* muſt needs be extremely ſinful:—Thus, ſuppoſing *dancing* and *gaming* to be *innocent* and *inoffenſive* in themſelves, yet to perſons who, by the one, are tempted to *fret*, *ſwear* and *cheat;* or who, by the other, are tempted to *other ſins*, theſe diverſions muſt be *highly criminal.*—(3.) Where any particular diverſion, though innocent in itſelf, is greatly abuſed in a place, and madly purſued by the inhabitants, to the prejudice of *induſtry* and *good morals;* Chriſtians ought not only to *abſtain from*, but alſo *bear a teſtimony againſt* ſuch diverſions, ſo abuſed, for the good of ſociety.—(4.) Diverſions which may be innocent in themſelves, may change their nature and become exceeding criminal, either by being *miſtimed*, or *too long continued.* For inſtance, to indulge to amuſements on the *Sabbath-day*, or in a time of

public distress or *calamity* which calls for conſideration, mourning, prayer and repentance;—or, to indulge to diverſions and amuſements, when *juſtice*, *charity* and *mercy* call us to *other* and *more important* buſineſs, is doubtleſs *very ſinful*. Or when (as was obſerved above) we ſquander much of our precious time in trifling amuſements, and make them the *business of life*; this is to act the part of the *wicked* and *unprofitable ſervant*, who was juſtly condemned to utter darkneſs.

7. A life ſpent in giddy diverſions, is utterly incompatible with the hopes of ſalvation; being inconſiſtent with a *due* and *ſerious concern* either for the *ſoul* or the *body*, for ourſelves, or for others.

8. It might be a good touch-ſtone for ſuch diverſions as are *ſuitable* and *becoming* for Chriſtians; to try within ourſelves whether we could ſeriouſly aſk GOD's bleſſing upon them; or quit them at an inſtant, and addreſs ourſelves to GOD in ſolemn prayer: For, as it is our duty always to watch and pray, leſt we enter into temptation, and to be ever in a poſture of readineſs to meet the ſummons of death in the way of our duty; and as we know not the moment we may be called to give an account of our ſtewardſhip, all diverſions inconſiſtent with this frame of mind, ſeem improper for Chriſtians.

9. To render diverſions or amuſements

lawful, they muſt have theſe properties:—(1.) They muſt be *innocent* in themſelves:—(2.) They muſt be *decent* and of *good repute*, or ſuch as the generality of good people have not condemned (and this will cut off *card-playing*, and almoſt all *games of hazard*, more eſpecially *all gaming for money*, from the liſt of innocent diverſions):—(3.) They ought to be ſuch as are not of pernicious conſequence, by the bad regulation and abuſe of them in the places where we live:—(4.) No more of our precious time ſhould be conſumed by them, than is barely neceſſary for the purpoſe of recreation; nor ſhould they be oftener uſed than is needful, leſt the mind be intoxicated by them, and led off from more important matters, by contracting a habit of trifling and levity:—(5.) They ſhould be ſuch as we find by experience are not attended with ſtrong temptations to ourſelves, and as have no ſenſible tendency to draw off our minds from the duties of religion, or from the neceſſary and important duties of life. Upon the whole, they ſhould be ſuch, and ſo uſed and regulated as not to excite any remorſe of conſcience in a ſenſible, ſerious and tender mind.

10. Though it does not ſeem reaſonable, or conſiſtent with the preſent frail and imperfect ſtate of human nature, to forbid all *kinds* of worldly amuſements and recrea-

tions, as *unlawful*, yet to perſons of a right way of thinking, and of a ſpiritual and refined taſte; theſe kinds of diverſions will be found *very little necessary;* and the very duties of religion, ſuch as *reading*, *singing of psalms* with melody in the heart, *meditation* and *contemplation* on the works and ways of GOD, *religious conference*, and *doing good offices* to the ſouls and bodies of men, will furniſh pleaſures and delights, far preferable to any that can reſult from worldly pleaſures and amuſements.

11. In ſhort, the faſhionable diverſions are attended with ſo many ſnares and dangers to virtue and innocence, and, at the beſt, are ſuch *thieves of precious time*, that thoſe diſcover the *soundest judgment* who have the leaſt taſte and fondneſs for them, and who leaſt frequent and join in them.

12. Religion promiſes the *highest* and *noblest comforts and pleasures*, and thoſe who betray too fond a deſire for worldly pleaſures and diverſions, either prove that they have never experienced the pleaſures of religion, or, by their conduct, perſuade the world, that the others are *equally necessary* and *agreeable*.

13. The *devil*, by a ſurpriſing dexterity, has turned ſome of the moſt ſolemn periods of life, into ſeaſons devoted to the maddeſt riot and giddy diverſion; witneſs our *birth-days*, and the *firſt day of every new-year*.

ESSAY LVIII.

The VALUE *and* IMPORTANCE *of a* CHILD.

1. IMMORTALITY has ſtamped an amazing value on man. No conſcious being, who is capable of eternal happineſs or miſery, can poſſibly be *unimportant* or *of little account.* Man, who carries about with him a *rational*, *undying* ſoul, little knows or conſiders of what a treaſure he is poſſeſſed. All the beauties, all the riches, all the ſtupendous wonders of material nature are, in compariſon with it, leſs than nothing, and vanity! If man conſider this, would it not be more his endeavor to act up to the dignity of his nature? Would he not be aſhamed of *baſe*, *mean* and *ignoble* actions, which vilify and debaſe his real importance, and degrade him below his rank in the univerſe?

The moment in which a rational immortal ſpirit animates a human *fœtus*, a ſpark is kindled which ſhall never be extinguiſhed. The material ſun will grow old, wax dim with years, and be probably put out as a lamp that burneth; the ſtars ſhall fall from their orbits, and be covered with darkneſs; but this breath of the Almighty, this intellectual ſpark once kindled up in the *moral* world, ſhall burn on with undimin-

iſhed and ever increaſing luſtre, as long as GOD himſelf endures.

3. The birth of a child we deem to be but a trifling event, and look with *indifference*, perhaps with *contempt*, on the little, helpleſs ſtranger. But if we view it with the penetrating eye of reaſon; if we conſidered it as emerging from eternal night into life immortal;—as an heir of worlds unknown, and a candidate for an everlaſting ſtate;—as a glimmering ſpark of being, juſt ſtruck from nothing by the all-creating rock, which muſt burn and flame on to eternity, when ſuns and ſtars have returned to their native darkneſs or nonentity;—which muſt ſurvive the funeral of nature, and live thro' the rounds of endleſs ages; which muſt either riſe from glory to glory, aſcending perfection's ſcale by endleſs gradations, or ſink deeper and deeper into the bottomleſs abyſs of miſery, and to which its immortality muſt either prove an *unſufferable curſe*, —or a *bleſſing inconceivable*, according to the manner in which it ſhall have acquitted itſelf in its preſent probationary ſtate—we ſhall clearly diſcern, that the value and importance of a human infant can ſcarcely be computed.

4. To illuſtrate this thought, let us briefly conſider, *the evil* or *good* which may be either *done* or *received* by a child, in the courſe of its exiſtence. And,

(1.) Perhaps this child is an *embrio-fiend.* Knoweſt thou, O man, O parent, to what this child is born? Of what this child is capable? It is now a pitiable, helpleſs infant, but if thou kneweſt the enormous ſins and dreadful ſufferings with which its future exiſtence is pregnant, and moſt of them probably thro' thy own ſinful example and guilty neglect, thou wouldſt be ſo far from rejoicing at its birth, that thou wouldſt weep and lament for the miſeries which are coming upon it, and upon thyſelf for thy neglect of the duties which thou oweſt it. Perhaps thou haſt never prayed that GOD might ſanctify this child while in the womb. It has been indeed baptized; but haſt thou ever offered up one fervent prayer for it ſince it has been born? Haſt thou offered it up to the holy Trinity by faith, and with that ſolemnity which the baptiſmal dedication requires? Inſtead of ſitting before it a pious and virtuous example, teaching it to pray, inſpiring it with a horror againſt vice, inſtilling into its tender opening mind, the principles of piety and good morals, correcting its errors, and reſtraining its paſſions and appetites, haſt thou not ſet before it the very worſt example—taught it the language of blaſphemy and profanity, foſtered every malignant paſſion, and cheriſhed every budding vice in its ſoul? And what *is the* conſequence? It grows up a monſter

of wickedneſs, a *devil incarnate*. It ſpreads the baneful contagion of vice as far as its influence can reach; becomes the *tempter*, the *devil* of every company; the ſpoiler and obſtructer of all good! How many of its fellow-immortals has it drawn into guilt and miſery? Perhaps it at length becomes infamous for wickedneſs, and blots the annals of hiſtory with a character diſgraceful to human nature, and with crimes before *unparelelled*, *unheard of!* And O who can deſcribe the miſeries which await it in a ſtate of retribution? The *Neros*, the *Herods*, the *tyrants*, the *ſcourges* of the earth, were once helpleſs infants!

(2.) Perhaps this child is an *embrio-angel*. Knoweſt thou, O man, O parent, to what this child is born, of what this child is capable? It has been the child of thy prayers and vows. Thou haſt ſolemnly given it up to GOD in baptiſm, and he has graciouſly accepted the ſurrender. It is thy conſtant ſolicitous care to recommend it daily to the guidance and protection of its Father in heaven; to ſet a blameleſs, pious and virtuous example before it; to inſtill into its tender opening mind the principles of piety, integrity and univerſal goodneſs. Indulgent heaven ſmiles on thine endeavors and renders them ſucceſsful by the concurring aids of omnipotent grace. The ſeed of knowledge and of grace ſo liberally ſown

will preſently grow up into a plenteous harveſt of uſefulneſs here and glory hereafter. The child, like the holy child JESUS, will grow up in knowledge, as in ſtature, and in favor both with GOD and *man*. The implanted principle of grace, ſhall be in him a well of water, ſpringing up into everlaſting life*. He ſhall bring forth much fruit to the glory of GOD, and to the good of his fellow mortals. Every day will bring him ſome good, or make him the inſtrument of ſome good to his fellow-men. Nor ſhall his progreſs in holineſs and happineſs be terminated by this mortal life, but probably go on through eternal ages. In a word, who can conceive the good of which ſuch a child may be made the inſtrument, or the degrees of happineſs and of glory to which it may be advanced? St. *Paul*, and all thoſe worthies under the *Patriarchal*, *Mosaical* and *Chriſtian* diſpenſations, who wrought ſo much good in the world, and who now ſhine in ſuch ſuperior orbs of glory, were once *feeble*, *despised infants!* May I ſpeak it with propriety on this occaſion, The bleſſed JESUS was once a child!

5. Since *ſuch* therefore, is the *amazing importance* of a child, why ſhould we wonder, that JESUS took up ſuch in his arms and bleſſed them, declaring, that of ſuch was the kingdom of heaven? Why ſhould

* John iv. 14.

we wonder, that their guardian angels continually behold the face of our Father in heaven? Why ſhould we wonder, that ſuch a ſtreſs is laid on their education in the holy ſcriptures, and that our riſen aſcending Lord ſhould have given it ſo particularly in charge to his Apoſtle *Peter*, to be peculiarly attentive to this, as one of the higheſt proofs of his love to him: *Simon Peter lovest thou me? Feed my lambs.**

6. If *ſuch* is the *value* and *importance* of children, can *parents*, can *maſters*, can the *clergy* ever be ſufficiently attentive to the unſpeakable important buſineſs of their religious education?

7. Parents, more eſpecially, are obliged to this duty by a number of the weighteſt motives and conſiderations. (1.) They have been the immediate inſtruments of bringing their children into a tempting, inſnaring world, and have tranſmitted to them an hereditary taint of corruption, the ſeed of guilt and of miſery. (2.) Providence has ſo ordered it, that children are continued in a helpleſs ſtate under the care of their parents, that they may have a ſufficient time and opportunity to form them for uſefulneſs in this life, and glory in that which is to come; and has implanted a ſtrong *storge* or *natural affection* in their heart towards their children, which ſhould powerfully

* Matth. xviii. 10. Mark x. 16. John xxi. 15.

prompt them to this duty. (3.) Their own comfort and the good of human ſociety, ſhould alſo powerfully incline parents to cultivate the minds and hearts of their children with the greateſt aſſiduity.

8. Three things ſeem of prime importance in the education of children, *inſtruction*, *government* and *example*.

(1.) Inſtruction ſhould be begun as ſoon as children are capable of receiving it, which is generally very early in life. The plaineſt and moſt practical truths ſhould firſt be inſtilled into the tender minds of children, and that in the plaineſt and moſt familiar manner, with ſuch a *ſeriouſness* and *ſolemnity* as is not forbidding and diſguſting, but which may rather convey *pleaſure* and *amuſement* to the mind. And parents ought to improve their own underſtandings, that they may be better qualified properly to inſtruct their children; which is no eaſy taſk to the wiſeſt.

(2.) In the article of government, parents ſhould attentively ſtudy the tempers and diſpoſitions of their children; as upon ſome ingenious tempers, gentle reproofs will have a better effect than ſtripes, and with others it is abſolutely neceſſary to uſe *ſevere reproof*, and the *rod of correction*. In government, it is beſt to begin with mildneſs in all children, as correction is a duty which *is man*aged well with great difficulty: When

correction is found neceſſary, it ſhould not be inflicted *raſhly*, without duly weighing the *nature* of the crime and its true *demerit*. The greateſt ſeverity in puniſhing ſhould be for *immoralities*; *indiscretions* ſhould be paſſed over with a light correction. A child ſhould never be puniſhed for *dullness* or other *natural infirmities*. In correcting no ſigns of *revenge* or *violent passion* ſhould ever appear, but the child who is corrected ſhould be made ſenſible, that it is done with reluctance, and purely for its own good; and much care ſhould be taken, to give it a deep conviction of the evil of the crime, for which it is chaſtiſed.

(3.) All the inſtructions and corrections of parents will avail nothing, but rather make matters worſe, if their *examples* are *vicious* and *immoral*.

ESSAY LIX.

THE CONSTRAINTS OF CHRIST's LOVE:

A SERMON.

FROM IId. CORINTHIANS, v. 13, 14.

For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to GOD: *Or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of* CHRIST *constraineth us.*

IT ſeems evident by the whole tenor of this epiſtle, that the holy and zealous Apoſtle had not a few enemies in the church of *Corinth*, and thoſe too ſuch as he might leaſt of all have expected—his fellow profeſſors and fellow teachers of chriſtianity. Theſe vain-glorious teachers, inſtead of building upon the Apoſtle's foundation, and ſupporting and confirming his authority over his beloved converts, endeavored by every trick of artifice and calumny to overturn and ſubvert it. They repreſented him to the *Corinthians* as mean and contemptible, as light and inconſtant, as proud, overbearing and imperious, as a ſubverter of the law, yea, as a drownright *madman*. They put a bad conſtruction on all his words and

...ons, preferred themſelves before him, and endeavored by every art to raiſe their own credit on the ruins of his apoſtolical authority and reputation.

"Such treatment as this could not but ...ly affect the good Apoſtle, not only as ſeem...ed to cool and weaken the affections ...beloved Corinthian converts towards him; but more eſpecially, as it was likely to prejudice their minds againſt the important doctrines of the goſpel which he had, with great labor, zeal and ſincerity, preached amongſt them. And hence it is, that we find ſo great a part of this epiſtle employed in *St. Paul's* vindication of his own character and conduct, as an Apoſtle of CHRIST;—in reclaiming the *Corinthian* church from an undue attachment to theſe Judaizing teachers,—and in rekindling proper regards to thoſe diſtinguiſhing and unadulterated doctrines of the goſpel, which he had, in the courſe of his miniſtry, propagated amongſt them.

As that peculiar *fervency* and *ardor* with which this eloquent Apoſtle of the Gentiles proſecuted the goſpel miniſtry, ſeems to be one of the great quarrels which his enemies had againſt him, he makes a noble and ſpirited apology to the Corinthians for his conduct in this reſpect, from the 10th verſe to the end of the chapter; alledging the *grandeur* and *importance* of the doctrines which

the goſpel reveals, as a ſufficient reaſon for the greateſt poſſible zeal and importunity of addreſs.

At the *tenth verse* he had laid down the certainty of a future judgment, in which all men muſt appear before the tribunal of CHRIST, to receive, every one, according to the deeds done in the body, whether good or bad. And this he alledges as one powerful reaſon and motive of zeal and fervor in the goſpel miniſtry: *Knowing therefore*, ſays he, *the terrors of the* LORD, *we perſuade men;* that is, being firmly aſſured of a ſtrict and impartial judgment, and its awful conſequences—of that eternal and irreverſible ſentence of condemnation which ſhall then paſs upon all finally unbelieving ſinners, and which ſhall fill their ſouls with unſpeakable terror and endleſs deſpair, we uſe every argument and every art of addreſs to perſuade men;—to *urge*, and, if poſſible, to *engage*, them to eſcape the terrors of that day, by a timous application to CHRIST, and a ſincere repentance.

And as ſome of theſe enemies, had probably unjuſtly charged him with a vain-glorious applauding, or commending of himſelf in his former epiſtle, he wipes off this aſſertion by telling them, that what he had been obliged to ſay of this kind, was only in his own neceſſary defence, and to *furniſh* his friends with a ſuitable anſwer to

his cenſorious and hypocritical enemies: For, ſays he, "We commend not ourſelves "again unto you, but give you occaſion to "glory on our behalf, that you may have "ſomewhat to anſwer them which glory in "appearance, and not in heart;" *i. e.* who ſeem outwardly to glory and triumph over us, altho' inwardly they are *ſelf-condemned*, and are conſcious, that they have no reaſon to glory againſt us.

In the words of our text the Apoſtle ſtill continues to vindicate himſelf and ſuggeſts a *farther* and *ſtill more powerful* motive of his zeal and earneſtneſs in the work of the miniſtry: For, ſays he, "whether we be "beſide ourſelves, it is to GOD: Or whe-"ther we be ſober, it is for your cauſe; for "the love of CHRIST conſtraineth us." As though he had ſaid; 'If, to *cold* and *indif-*'*ferent* ſpectators, who are not actuated by 'the ſame motives, and have not the ſame 'view and ſenſe of divine things as we the 'Apoſtles have, we ſhould ſeem to ſpeak 'and act with a degree of zeal bordering 'upon frenzy or enthuſiaſm, and to be tranſ-'ported beyond our *natural ſelves*— beyond 'the cold meaſures of human prudence or 'diſcretion—it is a *zeal for the glory of* 'GOD which animates us and produces 'theſe *extraordinary effects*:—Or if, on 'the other hand, we be *ſober*, and proſe-'cute all the arts of calm and diſpaſſionate

'reaſoning to convince ſinners, and lead 'them to GOD through CHRIST, it is *for* '*your ſakes* we take ſuch ſerious pains, in 'a matter which ſo nearly concerns your 'higheſt intereſts. So, that *love to* GOD, 'and *benevolence to men*, are the two grand 'principles by which we are actuated, and 'well may we be zealous in ſo good a cauſe; '*for the love of* CHRIST *conſtraineth us*— 'That unparalelled love of his, manifeſted 'in the redemption of a guilty world;— 'that love which engaged him to die for a 'loſt and dead world; a world of creatures 'who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; void 'of ſpiritual life, and under the condemna- 'tory ſentence of a broken law: This won- 'derful love of CHRIST (as well as the cer- 'tain proſpect of a future, impartial judg- 'ment) *conſtraineth us*—It *beareth us a- 'way* as with a *ſtrong* and *reſiſtleſs* torrent, 'ſo that we cannot reſiſt or withſtand that 'impetuoſity, with which it carries us on 'to the moſt active and zealous diſcharge 'of our miniſterial duty.'

The Greek word *ſunechei*, which we render *conſtraineth*, is vaſtly emphatical. Sometimes it ſignifies to *throng* and *preſs* on every ſide, as with a croud*; ſometimes, to *hold faſt* or *have in poſſeſſion*, as a priſoner†; ſometimes, to *ſurround*, or *inveſt a town by ſiege*, to prevent the enemy's eſcape;‡

* *Luke viii.* 45 † Luke xxii. 63. ‡ Luke xix. 43.

ſometimes, to be *in a ſtrait* between two contrary opinions, or to have the mind in an anxious ſtate of heſitancy or ſuſpence between two oppoſite reſolutions or determinations;* and ſometimes it ſignifies to be ſtrongly *urged* or *preſſed in ſpirit*, under a kind of *irreſistable impulse of mind*, which forcibly urges one on to the revelation of ſome myſtery, or the declaration of ſome truth; as it is ſaid, Acts xviii. 5. That *Paul (suneiche to to pneumati)* "being preſſed in ſpirit, "teſtified to the Jews that Jeſus was Chriſt." And it ſeems to have much this laſt ſenſe in our text: "The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us,"—it irreſiſtably moves, impels, and bears us on to zeal and importunity in the ſacred duties of our Apoſtleſhip, ſo that we can by no means diſengage ourſelves from the binding nature and urgency of thoſe motives and obligations it lays us under. 'For, as though he had ſaid, how can we 'be cold and unaffected in promoting the 'ſalvation of ſinners; a cauſe in which our 'glorious maſter not only *labored* and *ſuf-* '*fered*, but even *laid down his life:* Or, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, "then we are all dead: And that he died "for all, that they which live, ſhould not "henceforth live unto themſelves, but unto "him which died for them and roſe again." Therefore, this dying love of Chriſt conſtraineth us to be *inſtant* and *importunate*

* Phil. i. 23.

with ſinners, not only to accept the precious benefits it has purchaſed for them, but alſo to walk worthy of the glorious privileges and hopes it has conferred upon them.

Now, that we may the better perceive the *propriety* and *force* of the Apoſtle's reaſoning, and feel the *power* and *conſtraint* of a Saviour's love, I ſhall, in the *firſt* place, by divine aſſiſtance, briefly ſhow you the *peculiar* and *ſpecific* nature of the love of CHRIST, and by what characters it is diſtinguiſhed from, and exalted above the love of mortals. *Secondly*, Explain it by its effects, or ſhew in what inſtances it moſt eminently appears and is expreſſed. And *thirdly*, Apply the doctrine to ſome practical uſes, by ſhowing what influence it ſhould have upon us, both as *Miniſters* and *people*. And,

I. I am to ſhew you the peculiar and ſpecific nature of this love of CHRIST, and by what properties it is chiefly diſtinguiſhed from, and exalted above the love of Mortals. And,

1. We will find on the ſmalleſt reflection, that *love* is a certain mode or affection of the mind, drawing it forth with deſire and complacency towards ſome object; and, including in it (according to the ſcripture notion of it, and as it is exerciſed from GOD to man) *compaſſion*, *benevolence* and *bounty*.

Love, as it exists in us, besides its imperfection, has generally a great mixture of *selfishness*. 'We are sensible of a penu-'ry and want in our own beings.' We feel a dependance not only upon GOD, but also in some measure on our *fellow-creatures*, both for *being* and *well-being*. Our happiness in the present state, is neither complete, nor independent, and therefore we 'seek some 'augmentation of it, and some addition to 'it, by union with the objects we love.' If we closely and impartially examine the frame of our own nature, and the motives of our actions, we will find, that perhaps the most pure and disinterested acts of our love, benevolence and charity, are mixed with some degree of selfishness.—Let even a wicked person, who has any remains of natural tenderness and humanity left in his breast, see a man who is an object of great pity and compassion, his heart will melt towards him,—he will *feel* for his distress, and, if possible, give him some succour or relief;—not perhaps from any hope of reward in this life, nor merely out of ostentation, *that he may be seen and praised of men;*—not out of any love to GOD, or obedience to his command, nor, from any prospect of a future reward—(the supposition excludes all such motives;) but *purely* to relieve the anxious and sympathetic feelings of his own breast. He relieves the misera-

ble, that he himſelf may be leſs miſerable. He endeavors to mitigate the pain of his ſuffering and diſtreſſed fellow-creature, that he himſelf may be leſs pained and diſtreſſed. And although good and truly virtuous and gracious men may have nobler and purer motives of their charity, yet it is much to be queſtioned, whether ſomething of ſelf-intereſt may not mix itſelf with their moſt diſintereſted actions.

I am far, indeed from condemning this natural ſympathy and compaſſion, ſo deeply implanted in the human heart, by the GOD *of nature*, for the ſuccour and relief of our fellow-men. I only mention this in proof of what I have advanced, namely, 'That 'human love or charity, in the pureſt in-'ſtances of it, is not perhaps wholly diſinte-'reſted: Either *glory*, or *fame*, or *plea-'ſure*, or *profit*, or *commodity*, or ſome *in-'tereſted ſelfiſh* motive or obligation ſo 'mix themſelves with the moſt *generous* 'heroic acts of our love and charity, as to 'blaſt their pretenſions to *purity* and *dis-'intereſtedneſs*, and greatly to impair their 'merit.'

But now 'the love of CHRIST is not 'this way excited. We had neither done 'any thing to *oblige* him, nor had we any 'thing to *engage* him, farther than the mi-'ſery in which he ſaw us involved might '*move* him.' He loved us *only* becauſe he

would love us. He had no *by-end*, no *self-interest* to ſerve in loving us and having compaſſion upon us. *Herein is love*—a peculiar and diſtinguiſhing love—*not that we loved him but that he loved us;* which is equally true of the Father and of the Son.*

2. This love of CHRIST, as it is a *pure* and *diſinterested*, ſo it is 'a *free*, *generous* 'and *heroic* love; like that of ſome great 'and public benefactor, who touched with 'commiſeration for the afflictions and diſ-'treſſes of mankind, undertakes their relief. '*When we were without ſtrength*, *ungodly* '*ſinners*, *enemies*, ſays the Apoſtle, CHRIST '*died for us.*"‡ Either of theſe three laſt characters might, in the eſtimate of human reaſon, have fruſtrated the kind intentions of a Saviour's love: But lo! it triumphs over them all. It is a *ſingular*, *irresistable*, *unconquerable*, *triumphant* love;—a love, as the wiſe man deſcribes that paſſion, *ſtronger than death; many waters*, numberleſs provocations and indignities, *could not quench it.*† Many and great obſtacles ſtood in its way, the wrath of GOD, the cruelty of men, the rage of devils, the ſhame and pain of the croſs, and, what was worſe than all, the ingratitude and obſtinacy of thoſe very ſinners who were the objects of this love, and their contempt of and averſion to its ſaving deſigns—and yet it ſurmounted

* 1 John iv. 10. ‡ Rom. v. 6, 8, 10. † Cant. viii. 6.

them all! Are mankind *ungodly, sinners, enemies?* Yet CHRIST will love them and die for them! O wonderful philanthropy! Surely no inſtance of human love can equal this. We have heard of and applauded brave and generous men, who have hazarded and expoſed their lives for their friends, their country, their religion;—yea, we have heard, 'perhaps in the ſingle inſtance of '*Damon* and *Pythias*, of one friend's of-'fering to lay down his life for another. 'And indeed, as our Saviour obſerves, '*greater love has* no man *than this, that he* 'lay down his life for his friends; this be-ing the very utmoſt extent of *human friend-ſhip* ‡: But greater love *hath* CHRIST, who lay down his life for his enemies!

3. Yea, ſo great and unparalelled is this love of CHRIST to ſinners, that it ſurmounts all human thought and comprehenſion. The Apoſtle urges his beloved *Ephesians to comprehend with all saints, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of* CHRIST, *which*, adds he, *passeth knowledge**. The breadth, and length, and depth, and height of this love are beyond our *ken* in the preſent ſtate; and indeed, we ſhall, perhaps, never be able *fully* to comprehend them. In order to know the juſt dimenſions of a Saviour's love, we muſt firſt know the full dignity of

‡ John xv. 13. * Ephes. iii 18, 19.

his perſon, the greatneſs of his condeſcenſion, and the depth of his ſufferings; and theſe, perhaps, no created underſtanding will ever be able fully to comprehend.—What a ſtrange command, or requiſition, therefore, is this?—to know and comprehend a love, which is *incomprehensible* and *passeth knowledge!*—I anſwer, this is a lively expreſſion of the diſtinguiſhing greatneſs of CHRIST's love, in the Apoſtle's *grand* and *masterly* manner. The love of *Christ* is a ſubject which all the ſaints ſearch and pry into with the greateſt attention and delight. They endeavor to comprehend it more and more: 'ſomething they know; 'more they deſire to know; they ſtoop down 'with the angels, *and desire to look into these things.*'† They are daily making new diſcoveries and new reſearches into the wonders of his love which paſſeth knowledge, and which will prove the continual exerciſe and the increaſing joy and admiration of their perfected ſpirits, thro' the ages of eternity; when they ſhall join in that new and perpetual ſong, "Worthy is the lamb, that was ſlain, "to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, "and ſtrength, and honor, and glory and "bleſſing: for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt re-"deemed us to GOD, by thy blood, out of "every kindred, and tongue, and people "and nation*." Now, the Apoſtle prays

† 1 Pet. i. 12. * Rev. v. 9—12.

for theſe *Ephesians*, that the *same mind* might be in them, and that with all ſaints, they might ſtudy more and more to comprehend the boundleſs and amazing dimenſions of the love of *Christ*, as being the moſt powerful motive to reciprocal love, and cheerful univerſal obedience.

By ſuch characters then is this love of *Christ* diſtinguiſhed from, and exalted above, the love of mortals. It is *pure* and *disinterested—free, generous*, and *heroic*—and exceeds all human comprehenſion. I proceed.

II. To explain this love of *Christ* by its effects; or to ſhow in what inſtances it moſt eminently appears and is expreſſed. And here the field is ſo exceeding large, that I muſt of neceſſity be very brief and general. Were an angel, with all his heavenly knowledge and eloquence, to attempt a diſplay of the grand proofs and effects of his love, how infinitely muſt he come ſhort of doing juſtice to the ſubject? How much more *we*, whoſe views and apprehenſions are limited and confined? But that we may attempt it in our feeble and imperfect manner,

1. The greatneſs of our Savior's love manifeſts itſelf in the *readiness* and *cheerfulness* with which he undertook our relief in the covenant of redemption. Great was the miſery into which mankind were fallen,

All were dead, as the verſe below our text aſſuresus. The human race, as *one man*, had revolted and apoſtatized from GOD, and were becomes ſlaves to *satan* and their own luſts. The whole world of mankind were become guilty before GOD, and were enemies to him by wicked works. This is that *ſpiritual death*—that ſeparation of the ſoul from GOD, the fountain of *ſpiritual and eternal*, as well as of *natural* life—that *death in treſpasses* and *ſins*, mentioned by the Apoſtle, Eph. ii. 1. And the plain and juſt conſequence of this, was a ſentence of condemnation to *eternal death.*

Such was the condition of lapſed man when *Chriſt* undertook for him; proportionably great therefore muſt that price and work of redemption be, which was neceſſary to reſtore the human race to GOD's forfeited favor, and to their own loſt purity, perfection and happineſs. GOD's majeſty was offended, and his law tranſgreſſed. The former muſt therefore be *appeaſed* and the latter *honored.* For this purpoſe the Redeemer muſt aſſume our nature; a body muſt be prepared for him, in which he muſt not only *obey* and *ſuffer*, but even *die! All were dead, and he must die for all!* Before he could ſee his ſeed;—ſee the travail of his ſoul and be ſatisfied:—before the Father would give him *the Heathen for his inheritance*, and *the uttermoſt parts of the*

earth for his possession, he muſt *bear our griefs*, and *carry our ſorrows*; he muſt be *wounded for our transgressions*, *bruised for our iniquities*, *and make his soul an offering for our sin**.

This was the hard law of redemption—*these* the arduous conditions to which our Redeemer muſt ſubmit! He muſt aſſume a body;—he muſt *ſuffer* and *obey*, *bleed* and *die* in the cauſe! And yet how cheerfully does he undertake it, when there was no other to help or bring deliverance? "Sacrifice and offering thou didſt not deſire," ſays he,——"then ſaid I, lo, I come; in "the volume of the book it is written of "me: I delight to do thy will, O my GOD: "Yea, thy law is written within my heart†." He well knew the will of his heavenly Father: He perfectly underſtood the difficult law of redemption which he had put himſelf under: He knew how dearly he muſt purchaſe the ſalvation of ſinners. The black and diſmal ſcene of his ſufferings was full in his view; and yet he *so loved us* as to ſubmit with delight——rejoicing in the diſtant proſpect of relieving and ſuccoring periſhing rebels, on theſe difficult terms. *Lo*, *I come*, ſays the benevolent Redeemer,——I delight to do thy will, O my GOD! "He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the "earth, and his delights were with the ſons

* *Iſa. liii.* 4, 5, 11. Pſal. ii. 8. † Pſal. xl. 6—8.

"of men of old, even from everlaſting**."

2. How ſurprizing an inſtance have we of his love, in his *incarnation*, in conſequence of theſe engagements? "In the "fullneſs of time, GOD ſent forth his Son, "made of a woman, made under the law, "that he might redeem them that are un-"der the law*."——"The word, (ſays St. "*John*) was made fleſh, and dwelt among "us†." The *Meſſiah* became IMMANUAL, GOD *with us*, GOD *manifeſt in the fleſh*, clothed with mortality, and *tabernacling* among men! So great was his condeſcenſion and abaſement, that he "laid aſide a "glory which he had with the Father be-"fore the world was‡." Although he was originally *in the form of* GOD, veſted with divine perfections and honors; yet he vailed theſe glories under the rags of humanity, and "took upon him the form of a ſervant‖ "For we know the grace of our Lord Je-"ſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet "for our ſakes he became poor, that we "through his poverty might be rich¶." Amazing condeſcenſion! Unparalelled grace! Had an angel, touched with compaſſion for a few periſhing mortals, and in order to do them ſome ſignal ſervice, condeſcended for a while to leave his ſeraphic joys; to take up his dwelling in a human

** Prov. viii. 31. * Gal. iv. 4. † John i. 14.
‡ John xvii. 5. ‖ Phil. ii. 6. ¶ 2d Cor. viii. 9.

circumſtances of our Saviour's life, each of them will ſerve to illuſtrate the wonders of his love. While on the ſtage of public action, he ſtill appeared under the ſame diſadvantages as to any characters of worldly ſplendor or renown, and in circumſtances of low abaſement; was ſtill "a man of "ſorrows and acquainted with griefs, de-"ſpiſed and rejected of men. The ſon of "man had not where to lay his head;"† and having no worldly eſtate, conſequently he was of *little worth* in the eyes of the world, and had but *few friends* among the children of men. Nor could his ſpotleſs reputation eſcape the keeneſt reproaches of ſinners. The *holy one* and *the just;* he who *did no ſin*, and in whoſe mouth was *found no guile*, who was *holy*, *harmleſs*, *undefiled and ſeparate from ſinners*, and of whom this world was not worthy, was calumniated and traduced as a *blaſphemer* a *deceiver*, a *mad-man*, and a *confederate with devils*. Thus did he endure the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf—'of 'ſinners, (O amazing ingratitude!) to-'wards whom he had the kindeſt intentions, 'and for whom he was actually doing the 'kindeſt things.' *Strange*, *myſterious* love, that reconciled the SON of GOD to ſuch treatment from his own guilty creatures, and engaged him to bear it with a meek-

* Matth. viii. 20.

neſs and reſignation, which the rudeſt injuries could neither conquer nor diſturb! But,

4. The laſt ſcene of his ſufferings and death, is the moſt aſtoniſhing and incomprehenſible inſtance of his love. Here the ſcriptures lay the *grand emphasis*. He *died!* He died for ME! He died for ALL! "He bore our ſins in his own body, on the "tree! He gave himſelf for US, that he "might redeem us to himſelf, and make us "a peculiar people, zealous of good works! "To him that loved us, and waſhed us from "our ſins in his own blood;—to him be "glory and dominion for ever and ever, "Amen!" Here *all* is wonder. Eloquence itſelf is dumb—and the power of words and language utterly unable to expreſs the condeſcenſions of this love. *Agonizing, dying* love! Love written in *tears*, and *groans* and *blood!* The *son of* GOD *bleeding* and *expiring* for the *sons of men*, that he might raiſe them to the dignity and happineſs of the *sons of* GOD! Could he have purchaſed our redemption without the pain and ſhame of the croſs, the condeſcenſion had not been ſo exceedingly amazing: but this could not be;——without *shedding of blood* there could be *no remission*;... and therefore, *he died for us*.... he humbled himſelf to the loweſt degree of abaſement, and became obedient unto the death even

the death of the croſs, the moſt cruel and painful, as well as vilifying and abaſing death; —even the death of a Roman ſlave! He took a body, on purpoſe to be *ſtripped, pierced, wounded, broken*—to *languiſh, bleed* and *die!* —He became a man, with deſign that he ſhould be a man of ſorrows and acquainted with griefs;——"That GOD ſhould lay "upon him the iniquities of us all, and "make his ſoul an offering for ſin;—— "might bruiſe him and put him to grief!*"

Nor was there one circumſtance of horror wanting in this *amazing tragedy*,—one bitter ingredient miſſing in this *tremendous cup*, a guilty conſcience and total deſpair, excepted. Betrayed by his diſciple, relinquiſhed by his friends, inſulted by devils, ſurrounded by the cruel mocks and taunts of his enemies, forſaken of his father, deſtitute of the ſupports and conſolations of a common martyr, pierced with nails, transfixed with a ſpear—he expired between two thieves—the ſun hiding his face, the earth trembling, graves opening, rocks rending, and all nature as it were, ſympathiſing with her expiring LORD, and feeling for the pains and indignities which he endured! *He died;* and O, *what a death?* Let *this death*, therefore, be unto our ſouls the voucher of his love.—By this let us meaſure it in its amazing dimenſions!—Nor,

* *Iſa. liii.*

5. Did his love terminate with his mortal life on earth: If it had it had been ſtill incomplete, and we might ſtill have periſhed in our ſins. But as he died for our ſins, ſo he roſe again for our juſtification, and ever lives at the Father's right hand, making interceſſion for his people. Hence the apoſtle's triumph: "Who ſhall lay any thing "to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD "that juſtifieth, who is he that condem-"neth? It is *Chriſt* that died, yea rather, "that is riſen again, who is even at the "right hand of GOD, who alſo maketh in-"terceſſion for us."* As the love of *Chriſt* engaged him to humble himſelf *even unto death* for ſinners, ſo it alſo engaged him to become not only an *advocate* and *interceſſor* with GOD the Father in their behalf, but alſo "a Prince and a Savior, to give repen-"tance and remiſſion of ſins."† It engag-"ed him, after he had led captivity captive, "to aſcend upon high, and to give gifts to "men, even to the rebellious;"—to ſend down his Spirit as the *renewer* and *comforter* of his people;—to enter into the holieſt as their *fore-runner*, to take poſſeſſion of the promiſed inheritance in their name and ſtead, and prepare manſions of glory in his Father's houſe for their reception, and to "give ſome Apoſtle's; and ſome Pro-

* Rom. viii. 33, 34.
† *Acts* v. 31.

"phets; and ſome Evangeliſts; and ſome "Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting "of the ſaints, for the work of the miniſtry, "for the edifying of the body of *Chriſt*; "till we all come in the unity of the faith, "and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, "unto a perfect man, unto the meaſure of "the ſtature of the fulneſs of *Chriſt*."*

And how ſignal is his grace and love in *applying* the ſalvation he has purchaſed, to the ſouls of men;—in enlightening, converting, guiding, reſtoring, quickening, and comforting them? He brings them into his banqueting-houſe, and his banner over them is love; he ſatisfies their ſouls as with marrow and with fatneſs, and cauſes them to eat hidden manna, and to drink living waters of divine conſolations. He knows and pities their infirmities, ſympathizes with them under their temptations, ſufferings and conflicts, and follows them with a conſtant, tender care. Whom he loveth he loveth to the end. His affection is not *wavering*, *fickle*, and *inconſtant*, but *firm* and *ſteady* as the foundation of his throne. He never leaves nor forſakes his own, but cauſes goodneſs and mercy to follow, them all the days of their lives, and when their "fleſh and their heart fails, he "is the ſtrength of their heart, and their "everlaſting portion.† He giveth unto

* Epheſ. iv. 8,—13. † Pſal. lxxiii. 26.

"his ſheep, (his believing people) eternal "life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither "ſhall any be able to pluck them out of "his hand;" and as he has the *keys of death and of the unseen world* he encourages them joyfully to commit their departing ſouls into his gracious hands, and confidently to pray with the martyr *Stephen*, in the very article of death, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit.**

6. Heaven is the glorious theatre on which the ſuper-abounding riches and fulneſs of the love of *Christ*, both to the ſouls and bodies of his people, ſhall be moſt earneſtly and magnificently diſplayed, in its *last scene* and *final issue*. Heaven is the full accompliſhment of this love. *There*, if ever, the *heights*, and *depths*, and *lengths*, and *breadths* of this love of *Christ*, will be *fully comprehended*——at leaſt, *clearly perceived*, to the everlaſting aſtoniſhment of the enraptured ſoul....ever advancing.... ever improving in perfection and happineſs ....ever drinking in full draughts of thoſe rivers of pleaſure which flow from the fountain-head of life, joy, perfection and immortality....." *Christ* loved the church, "and gave himſelf for it, that he might "preſent it to himſelf a glorious church, "not having ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch

* *John* x. 28. Acts vii. 59.

"thing.†" This was his ultimate end in *coming from heaven*, that he might advance his ſervants and followers *thither: I go*, says he, "to prepare a place for you. And "if I go and prepare a place for you, I will "come again and receive you unto myſelf, "that where I am, there ye may be alſo. "Father, I will that they alſo whom thou "haſt given me, be with me where I am; "that they may behold my glory which "thou haſt given me‡."

And now, having thus ſhowed you the *peculiar* and *transcendent nature*, and briefly pointed out to you, ſome of the moſt eminent expreſſions and effects of a Redeemer's love, what needs more to illuſtrate the force of the Apoſtle's reaſoning, or to ſhow you the conſtraints of this love?....*Show you*, did I ſay? Nay, do we not already begin to *feel* the conſtraints of this love upon our ſouls, *bearing us away* with a *ſweet*, but powerful influence to higher degrees of *faith*, *love*, *gratitude* and *obedience?* have not our ſouls already begun to *catch the holy fire*, and to enter into the force and ſpirit of the Apoſtle's reaſoning...."the love of "*Chriſt* conſtraineth us, becauſe we thus "judge, that if one died for all, then were "all dead: and that he died for all, "that they which live, ſhould not hence-"forth live unto themſelves, but unto him

† Epheſ. v. 25. ‡ John xiv. 3.——xvii. 24.

"which died for them, and roſe again?" Do we not already begin to anticipate the ſongs of the redeemed nations; "Unto "HIM that loved us, and waſhed us from "our ſins in his own blood, and hath made "us kings and prieſts unto GOD, even HIS "FATHER; to HIM be glory and dominion "for ever and ever; AMEN*!" Surely our hearts muſt be harder than adamant, more impenetrable than the nether mill-ſtone, if ſuch a view of the love of *Chriſt*, how meanly ſoever diſplayed, can have no ſoftening influence over them, no conſtraining force upon them! But this naturally leads me in the

III. Place to improve the doctrine to ſome practical uſes, by ſhewing *what influence* and *conſtraint* this love of *Chriſt* ſhould have upon us, both as miniſters and people.

1. As *Chriſtians*, as the *diſciples* and *followers* of the bleſſed JESUS, ſurely this love of his ſhould conſtrain us to reciprocal acts of love, imitation and obedience.

(1.) To reciprocal acts of love. The natural effects of love, are *gratitude* and *reciprocal love*. Love begets love, as naturally as a parent begets his own likeneſs. 'Tis as natural for us to love our friends, and be grateful to our benefactors, as to dread and fly from our enemies.—Now, as the bleſſed JESUS is not only moſt amiable

* *Rev.* i. 5, 6.

and lovely in himself, poſſeſſed of every natural and moral excellency which can attract the eſteem of an intelligent being, but as he is alſo our beſt friend and moſt generous benefactor, hence our obligations to gratitude and reciprocal love are quite indiſputable. He has purchaſed our love and gratitude at the deareſt price, and has engaged us *to love him* by the moſt aſtoniſhing acts of love and beneficence to us; in ſo much, that nothing can be more juſt and equitable than that dreadful denunciation of the Apoſtle, againſt all who are inſenſible to the attractions of a Saviour's love: *If any man*, ſays he, *love not the* LORD JESUS CHRIST, *let him be anathema, maranatha, i. e.* let him be *accurſed*, and the LORD will come ſpeedily and execute that curſe upon him.* The queſtion therefore, is not, *whether* the love of *Chriſt* to *us*, ſhould *be* a motive of ours to *him;* for this is ſelf-evident? But rather, *in what manner* we may beſt expreſs our love to our great benefactor? And it is plain, that this is beſt done by imitation and obedience. It follows therefore,

(2.) That the love of *Chriſt* ſhould conſtrain us to the *imitation* of him, our beloved Lord and Maſter. To imitate the beloved object, is a natural and genuine effect of love. We naturally endeavor to

* 1 Cor. xvi. 22.

imitate thoſe whom we love, eſpecially in thoſe things for which we love them, and by which we hope to commend ourſelves to their favor and eſteem. Now, as the *moral perfections of Chriſt*, and thoſe divine graces and virtues which ſhone ſo conſpicuous in him, thro' the whole of his incarnate ſtate, are one of the principal foundations of our eſteem for him; and as the imitation of thoſe virtues and graces ſerve principally to recommend us to his friendſhip and regard: So *in theſe* we will earneſtly endeavor to imitate him, if we truly love him. We will endeavor, that the ſame mind and temper be in us, which was alſo in CHRIST JESUS.* If we are indeed his *ſheep* we will hear his voice and follow him;—will deny ourſelves and take up our croſs, learning of him to be meek and lowly, pure and patient, humble and reſigned, that, in all things, we may be conformed unto him, and, in ſo doing, find peace, and reſt, and happineſs to our ſouls.†

The ancient philoſophers manifeſted their love to the leaders of their reſpective ſects, by a *moſt ſcrupulous imitation* of them, in the whole tenor of their behaviour: And ſhall we, the diſciples of JESUS, be leſs obſervant of the moſt holy and perfect exam-

* *Phillip.* ii. 5.
† *Matth.* xvi. 24.——xi. 29. John x. 27.

ple of our divine Maſter, than they were of thoſe of *Zeno* and *Pythagoras*, of *Plato* and *Ariſtotle?* Eſpecially, when the Apoſtle tells us, that *even hereunto are we called; becauſe Chriſt* alſo ſuffered for us, *leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps.** And when another Apoſtle aſſures us, that *he who ſaid he abideth in him*, or is his diſciple, *ought himſelf alſo ſo to walk, even as he walked.*†

(3.) The love of *Chriſt* ſhould conſtrain us, his followers and diſciples, to a *cheerful and univerſal obedience to all his commandments.* And what is this but to *imitate his example?* For, what duty hath he commanded us to perform, of which he hath not given us an example in his own conduct, ſo far as difference of nature, and circumſtances would permit? To obey him, therefore, in his moſt difficult and ſelf denying precepts, what is it but to imitate his own example, and to do that out of love and duty for him, which he, in obedience to his Father, hath done for our ſakes, and to promote our ſalvation and happineſs? To obey him, therefore, is to imitate him and to imitate him is to be like him both in holineſs and happineſs.

This *is the love of* God, ſays the Apoſtle, that is, the moſt certain and ſubſtantial evidence of our love to him, *that we keep his*

* 1 Pet. ii. 21. † 1 John ii. 6.

*commandments.** And as this is the ſureſt teſtimony of our love to the Father, ſo it is alſo of the Son. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is "that loveth me. If a man love me, he "will keep my words; but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my ſayings."† We cheerfully and readily *obey* the perſon whom we *love*. Duty and inclination here unite their kindred influences; laying a powerful and irreſiſtible conſtraint on all the faculties of the ſoul, and engage them in a courſe of ready, active, cheerful and univerſal obedience. Beſides, this is the very uſe which the Apoſtle makes of the doctrine in the verſe below our text. *Chriſt died for all*, and the principal end of his doing ſo, was, that thoſe who *ſpiritually live*, in conſequence of his death, *ſhould not henceforth live unto themſelves, i. e.* according to the luſts of their own wills, or the dictates of their corrupt hearts; but according to the *law, will* and *pleaſure* of HIM *who died for them and roſe again*. Hence you ſee, that the obedience of Chriſtians, is one of the primary ends of *Chriſt's* death, as well as the higheſt and ſureſt evidence of their love to him. "He gave himſelf for us, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify us unto himſelf, a peculiar "people, zealous of good works:" And

* 1 John v. 3. † John xiv. 21, &c.

he will be the "Author of eternal ſalvation "only to them that obey him."*

Here then, Chriſtians, let us bring our love of *Chriſt* to this touch-ſtone, and try its *ſincerity* and its *ſtrength*. Do we love the Lord Jeſus *Chriſt* in ſincerity? If ſo, then we ſtudy above all things to pleaſe him, and dread above all things to offend him; —then we have an exquiſite reliſh for, and delight in his ſervice, and none of his commandments ſeem grievous to us, but the practice of the moſt ſelf-denying duties is rendered eaſy and delightful, by that love which is the principle of our obedience;— if ſo, then his Sabbaths, his houſe, his ordinances, his glory, honor and intereſt in the world, his laws and his people, are all of them dear to us, and beloved by us, for the love which we bear unto Jeſus: But, and if the contrary of all this matter of fact, then the dreadful, tremendous concluſion is, That the *love of the Father abideth not in us*, and *that we love not the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity!*

2. Upon us, who are the Miniſters of his everlaſting goſpel, the love of *Chriſt* ought to have a mighty conſtraint. As Chriſtians, we lie under the ſame obligations of love, gratitude, imitation and obedience with others. We lie involved in the ſame common ruin with the rest of our

* Tit. ii. 12. Heb. v. 9.

guilty race;—have *ourselves to save*, as well as *them who hear us*, and, therefore, have the ſame obligations to *Chriſt* for his great ſalvation, and have the ſame motives and neceſſity with others to *work out our own ſalvation with fear and trembling*, and to *give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure*.

Beſides, the whole tenor and all the duties of our ſacred office, tend directly to beget and cheriſh (ſo far as inſtrumental means can) the habits of holineſs and univerſal obedience in our ſouls; and therefore, perhaps, lays us under higher obligations to an exemplary piety than others who enjoy not the ſame advantages. As Chriſtian Miniſters, our obligations *riſe* and *multiply*. We are ſurrounded, as it were, and preſſed on every ſide, with a vaſt variety of the moſt cogent arguments and powerful motives to *zeal*, *ardor* and *diligence* in the diſcharge of our miniſtry. We are debtors both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, to the *wiſe* and the *unwiſe*. 'A 'diſpenſation of the goſpel is committed 'unto us, a neceſſity is laid upon us, and 'wo unto us, if we preach not the goſpel, 'if we be not inſtant in ſeaſon and out of 'ſeaſon; reproving, rebuking, exhorting 'with all long-ſuffering and doctrine."*

The *love of Chriſt*, conſtraineth us—

* *Rom.* i. 14. 1. Cor. ix. 16. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

charity and *universal benevolence to the souls of men* conſtrain us—our *ordination vows* conſtrain us—the *blood of ſouls will be upon us*, if we are unfaithful or remiſs: But if, on the other hand, we are *wise to win ſouls* to *Chriſt*;—if we are faithful and ſucceſsful in our office, important will be our ſervices among men, and great and glorious our reward in heaven. If we *turn many unto righteousness*, we ſhall *ſhine as the brightness of the firmament*, and *as the ſtars for ever and ever*; we ſhall deliver immortal ſouls from perdition, and increaſe the number of the bleſſed, and the *hallelujahs* of the redeemed. By the converſion of ſinners, we ſhall *give joy in heaven*, enlarge the Redeemer's kingdom, and promote his intereſt among men;—we ſhall weaken the kingdom of *ſatan*; defeat his malice; counteract his deſtructive deſigns, and leſſen the number of his unhappy ſubjects. And, finally every ſoul whom we are happily inſtrumental in ſaving, will be a new gem in our diadem of glory, a freſh acceſſion to our everlaſting joy and happineſs, on that memorable and important day, when the LORD ſhall 'make up his jewels, 'and give unto every man according to his 'works, and to the deeds done in the bo-'dy.'

Animated therefore by theſe glorious hopes fired by theſe important proſpects,

urged and preſſed, as it were, on every ſide, with theſe almighty motives and conſiderations, well might the love of *Christ*, the love of ſouls, and a ſenſe of duty and obligation, conſtrain the Apoſtles;—well may they conſtrain us their unworthy ſucceſſors, to the moſt ardent zeal and unwearied diligence in promoting the glory of GOD, the intereſt of *Christ*, and the ſalvation of ſinners;—well may they cauſe us to look down with ſovereign contempt on that *fear* and *favor* of men, which bring a ſnare, in the diſcharge of our duty, and engage us to be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD, knowing that our labor ſhall not be in vain in him;—well may they ſteel and fortify our hearts againſt all the oppoſition of *men* and *devils*, and cauſe us to cry out, with our ſtedfaſt, magnanimous Apoſtle, in the face of bonds, impriſonments and death itſelf,—'None of 'theſe things move us, neither count we 'our lives dear unto ourſelves, ſo that we 'might finiſh our courſe with joy, and the 'miniſtry which we have received of the 'Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the 'grace of GOD."*

When the great Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls was about to aſcend into heaven, he *thrice* interrogated *Peter*, in the ſame *terms*; '*Simon*, ſon of *Jonas*, lovest thou

* Acts xx. 24.

me more than theſe?' To which, when the great Apoſtle had *thrice* anſwered in the affirmative; 'Yea, Lord, thou knoweſt all 'things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.' His Lord charged him to teſtify his love to him, by *feeding his lambs and his sheep.** Do we therefore love the Lord Jeſus *Chriſt?* Let us give proof of our love, by feeding his lambs and his ſheep, and nouriſhing up in the words of faith and ſound doctrine, thoſe ſouls whom he hath redeemed with his precious blood. And O that they who hear us might learn to be wiſe to ſalvation; that, laying aſide all malice, and guile, and hypocriſies, and evil-ſpeakings, as new-born babes, they might deſire the ſincere milk of the word, and grow thereby. Amen and Amen.

*. John xxi. 15, &c.

ESSAY LX.

CHRISTIANS, LIGHTS IN THE WORLD; OR, THE *BEAUTY and EXCELLENCY of the CHRISTIAN LIFE:* A SERMON.

FROM PHILIPPIANS II. 15, 16.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of GOD *without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.*

THE Chriſtian character, *my brethren*, is a moſt *lovely* and *amiable* character; although, alas! it is a moſt *rare* and *uncommon* one in the world, even in the *Chriſtian world*, where, as all are Chriſtians by *name* and *profeſſion*, ſo all ought to be ſuch in *deed* and in *truth*. "He is not "a Jew, (ſays the Apoſtle) who is one out-"wardly, neither is that circumciſion which "is outward in the fleſh: But he is a Jew, "which is one inwardly, and circumciſion "is that of the heart, in the ſpirit, and not "in the letter, whoſe praiſe is not of man "but of God."*—So may we ſay with re-

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

gard to *christianity*: 'He is not a Chriſti-'an who is one merely in name and out-'ward profeſſion; but he only who has the 'heart, the *ſpirit*, the *temper*, the *princi-'ples*, and the *conduct* of a Chriſtian, whoſe 'praiſe is not of *man* only, but of GOD alſo.' To be Chriſtians *indeed* and in *reality*, *my brethren*, is to be lights in the world, to be harmleſs and blameleſs; unrebukeable and unreproveable, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation. And not only ſo; not merely to be thus *negatively* good; but alſo *poſitively* ſo; ſhining as lights to direct others in the way of life and happineſs—*Holding forth the word of life*.... Holding forth our good examples, as luminous torches or flambeaux, to conduct the feet of erring, wandering, benighted travellers, into the path of peace and felicity.

As *natural light* is the moſt pleaſing and comfortable object to the eye and to the mind;....as it reveals all natural objects to us;...directs our ſteps in this world;...points out the dangers of our way, and enables us to diſtinguiſh between that which is pleaſant and eligible, and that which is hurtful and pernicious. "For "truly, (as Solomon obſerves) the light is "ſweet, and a pleaſant thing it is for the eyes to behold the ſun."* So *truth* and

* Eccles. xi. 17

virtue, which anſwer much the ſame purpoſes in the *moral* and *intellectual* worlds, as material light does in the *natural*, are beautifully termed the *light of the mind*, in a figurative and metaphorical ſenſe. Hence alſo, GOD, the great ſource and examplar of all truth and virtue, is called *light*. 'GOD is 'light, and in him there is no darkneſs at all.' And *Christ*, who is the "brightneſs of the Fa- "ther's glory, and the expreſs image of "his perſon," is called, by way of eminence, "The light of the world;—and "that light which lighteth every man which "cometh into the world." The ſcriptures alſo, which are the pureſt channels of truth and virtue to a benighted world, are called, "Lights in a dark place;—a light to our "feet, and a lamp or lanthorn to our "paths."

Agreeable to all this;—when ſinners are *converted*, or turned from *error* and *vice*, to *truth* and *virtue*, they are ſaid to have *their eyes opened*; their *underſtandings enlightened*, and to be *brought from darkneſs to light*, and from the power of ſatan to GOD: And GOD is ſaid to *bring them out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*. "Ye were "ſometime darkneſs, (ſays the Apoſtle) "but now are ye light in the Lord."

And hence, true Chriſtians are called *children of the light*,...and commanded to *walk in the light*; to *ſhine as lights in the*

world,...and to *let their light so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify our Father which is in heaven.*

To be a *true Christian*, therefore *my brethren* is to ſuſtain the *most honorable* and *beautiful* of all characters:...It is to *imitate* and *reſemble* GOD, who is the great ſource and fountain of light, and in whom there is no darkneſs at all;...to imitate and reſemble *Chriſt*, who is the *light of the world*, and the *life of men*;...to imitate and reſemble the *ſaints*, thoſe brave and generous ſouls, who, in all ages, have copied after GOD, and ſhone as lights in the world, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, holding forth the word of life....To be *true Chriſtians*, is to be as like to the glorious GOD, both in virtue and happineſs, ...and to do as much good to our fellow-creatures in our day and generation, as poſſibly we can:...in a word, to be as lovely, as venerable, as virtuous, as holy, as happy and as uſeful, as the capacities of our limited, depraved nature will permit.

St. Paul had founded a church in *Philippi*, which worſhipped the true GOD, and received the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, while many of their brethren and fellow citizens, ſtill continued in their idolatry and infidelity. It was, therefore, the deſire and ambition of the good Apoſtle, that the convert-

ed *Philippians* ſhould labor for the converſion of their heathen brethren. He deſired that the unbelieving and idolatrous *Philippians*, (who were attentive and malicious obſervers of their Chriſtian brethren, becauſe of the new religion they had embraced, and the new kind of life they had devoted themſelves to) ſhould ſee nothing in them, but what was *wiſe, reputable*, and of *good report;* and *ſuch as becometh the goſpel of Chriſt.*

This, however, it ſeems had not been the caſe, ſo much as the good Apoſtle wiſhed. Theſe *young converts* although they had broke off from the idolatry and infidelity of their neighbors, yet were ſtill of very imperfect characters, in point of morality :... Although they had embraced the profeſſion of Chriſtianity; yet they had not fully imbibed its ſpirit and temper. However ſound they might be in *faith*, yet they lacked that *charity*, which is the bond of *perfectness*, and without which true Chriſtianity, cannot either *live* or *move* or have *its being*. No ſooner had they broke off from their unbelieving and idolatrous brethren, than they began to quarrel among themſelves. This ſeems to have been the true ground and motive, of the Apoſtle's noble and excellent exhortation, in our text; which will ever be equally uſeful, and equally applicable, while Chriſtianity has a being

in a corrupt, imperfect, world and ſtate.

" Do all things, (ſays the Apoſtle) with-
" out murmurings and diſputings: That ye
" may be blameleſs and harmleſs, the ſons
" of GOD, without," &c.

In the words, we have *three* things obſervable, and which ſhall (thro' the divine aſſiſtance) be the ſubject of the preſent diſcourſe.

I. The *poſt* or *ſtation* of a Chriſtian in this world. He lives 'in the midſt of a 'crooked and perverſe generation;' who are, at heart, enemies to that holineſs which he profeſſes; who will be cloſe and malicious obſervers of all his conduct; and who are capable of being either greatly benefited, or greatly hurt by his example and converſation.

II. We have the *Chriſtian's deſtination* in this world; what divine providence deſigns he ſhould be; or what purpoſe he is deſigned to ſerve, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation. He is to *ſhine as a light in the world*: *Holding forth the word of life*,—that he may ſerve the double purpoſe of both ſaving himſelf and others.

III. We have the *duty of a Chriſtian* in this world, in order to his anſwering this deſtination of providence: 'He is to be '*harmleſs* and *blameleſs*; *a child of* GOD, *without rebuke*;' that the goſpel may not

be blamed; that ſinners may be converted, and that his Chriſtian brethren may be edified: In a word, 'He is to let this light of 'his ſo ſhine before men, that others, ſee-'ing his good works, may glorify our Fa-'ther which is in heaven.'

Are there any amongſt us, *my brethren*, who have the noble ambition, not only of obtaining this heavenly felicity ourſelves, but alſo of leading others in the ſame road? Are there any amongſt us, who have the noble ambition of concurring with *Jeſus Chriſt* in the work of human redemption? Let ſuch learn, to day, from St. *Paul*, to proſecute ſo noble a deſign by ſhining as lights in the world; by being *harmleſs and blameleſs* as the *children of* GOD *without rebuke*, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation. May the holy Spirit himſelf inſpire us with this divine ambition —and may the bleſſing of GOD, attending this diſcourſe, give us power and ſpirit to purſue ſo noble a deſign, until our endeavors are crowned with heavenly glory.—Amen.

I. Then we are briefly to conſider the *poſt* and *ſtation* of a true Chriſtian in this world:—'He lives in the midſt of a crook-'ed and perverſe generation.'

This ſentiment and expreſſion of the Apoſtle might be eaſily *juſtified* and *illuſtrated*, by conſidering the *religion* and *morals* of the *Jews* and *Heathens*, amongſt

which the primitive Chriſtians lived, to whom he here writes. The character which our Saviour and his Apoſtles have left us on record, both of the Jews and Gentiles of that age, (and which is abundantly confirmed by contemporary writers) makes it appear, that they were, indeed, 'a crooked 'and perverſe generation.'

The *Jews* had ſcarcely the very ſhadow of religion left amongſt them in that abandoned age. The meaſure of their iniquity ſeems then to have been *filled*, and they were *ripe for deſtruction*. To the *Phariſees*, the moſt *numerous* and reſpectable ſect amongſt them, our Saviour thus addreſſes himſelf—'Ye ſerpents, ye genera-'tion of vipers, how can ye eſcape the dam-'nation of hell?' And as to the *Sadducees*, they were men of *atheiſtical principles*, and deteſtable morals.

For the *morals* and *manners* of the *Heathens*, of that time, and into what a ſtate of luxury, debauchery, and univerſal corruption they had degenerated, I might refer you to their own hiſtorians, moraliſts and ſatyriſts: But that portrait which this Apoſtle himſelf has given us of the *Romans*, one of the moſt learned, philoſophical, and civilized Heathen nations, ſhall ſuffice in lieu of every other authority.—'Being filled '(ſays the Apoſtle) with all unrighteouſneſs, 'fornication, wickedneſs, covetouſneſs ma-

'licioufneſs; full of envy, murder, debate, 'deceit, malignity, whiſperers, backbiters, 'haters of GOD, deſpiteful, proud, boaſters, 'inventers of evil things, diſobedient to pa-'rents, without underſtanding, covenant 'breakers, without natural affection, impla-'cable, unmerciful; vile in their affections; 'changing the truth of GOD into a lie; and 'worſhipping and ſerving the creature more 'than the CREATOR, who is GOD over all, 'bleſſed for ever.'* What a black catalogue of vices is this? And was not that a 'crooked and perverſe generation,' indeed, of which this was the general and prevailing character?

But, *my brethren*, we need not go back to antiquity, to juſtify and illuſtrate this obſervation of the Apoſtle. In every age of the world, GOD's true church and people, "live in the midſt of a crooked and per-"verſe generation."

The Apoſtle is ſtill addreſſing every Chriſtian amongſt us, in the words of our text, with equal propriety as he did his converts at *Philippi*—"Be ye harmleſs and blame-"leſs, without rebuke, in the midſt of a "crooked and perverſe generation, amongſt "whom ye ſhine as lights in the world." The world, as diſtinguiſhed from the church, ever has been, and ever will be, "a crook-"ed and perverſe generation." This world has been ever diſtinguiſhed into two grand

* *Rom. i. 21,—34.*

claſſes of men, diametrically oppoſite in their principles, ends, motives, diſpoſitions and manners, and generally diſtinguiſhed in ſcripture by the appellation of the 'world, 'and the church ;....the ſeed of the woman, 'and ſeed of the ſerpent ;....the ſheep and 'the goats ;....the tares and the wheat ;.... 'the righteous and the wicked ;....the chil-'dren of this world, and the children of 'light.' If we attentively read the ſcriptures, we will find that the word world, is generally uſed to repreſent the worſt of theſe two claſſes.—"The world (ſays St. *John*) "lieth in wickedneſs.——The world (ſays "he) knoweth us not.——Love not the "world, neither the things that are in the "world. If any man love the world, the "love of the Father is not in him: For all "that is in the world, the luſt of the fleſh, "and the luſt of the eye, and the pride of "life, is not of the Father, but of the world." St. *James* tells us, "that the friendſhip of "the world is enmity with GOD;" and therefore beſeeches Chriſtians, *to keep themſelves unſpotted from the world.* St. *Paul* tells us, that "the LORD JESUS CHRIST "gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might "deliver us from this preſent evil world, ac-"cording to the will of GOD;"——and therefore earneſtly beſeeches Chriſtians not *to be conformed to this world*, in its manners, cuſtoms, ſpirit or maxims, but to be

transformed by the renewing of their minds. "If the world hate you (ſays CHRIST to his "diſciples) ye know that it hated me be- "fore it hated you. If ye were of the "world, the world would love his own; "but becauſe ye are not of the world, but "I have choſe you out of the world, there- "fore the world hateth you."

It were eaſy, *my brethren*, to multiply quotations to this purpoſe; but ſurely evidence enough has been produced to prove, that the world, in which Chriſtians live; or, that that company of men with which the church is contraſted, and from which it is diſtinguiſhed every where in ſcripture, is "a crooked and perverſe generation."

The *same truth* will evidently appear from the *general maxims* and *prevailing manners of* the world, by which the crookedneſs and perverſeneſs of their ſentiments and conduct will be clearly manifeſted. Will either the dictates of enlightened reaſon, the beſt intereſts of ſociety, or the *goſpel* of *Chriſt*, juſtify ſuch maxims as the following:—'Youth 'is the proper ſeaſon for pleaſure and gal- 'lantry:—It is ridiculous to make much 'ado about religion:—We ſhould not aſ- 'pire to be ſaints:—All that religion re- 'quires of us, is to be juſt and honeſt in 'our dealings:—Calumny and ridicule are 'the ſalt or zeſt of converſation:—It is un- 'worthy of a man of honour to put up with

'an affront. Revenge is ſweet:—Ambi-
'tion is the vice of noble ſouls:—Impuri-
'ty is intolerable in women, but pardona-
'ble in men. We ſhould be conformed to
'the world, and act agreeable to its max-
'ims.'—Which of theſe, my friends, (and a great many more might be added to the number) does not flatly contradict ſome precept of *Chriſt*, and the very ſpirit and genius of Chriſtianity?—And yet which of theſe maxims is not received in ſociety as a firſt principle, againſt the truth of which, it would be deemed affectation to diſpute?

And are not the *prevailing manners* of the world, exactly conformable to *theſe maxims?*—How few regard even the ſolemnity of an oath, where intereſt is concerned?—What faith is, now a days, to be put in the promiſes or profeſſions of men? The very form of religion is in ſuch ſovereign contempt, that it is deemed highly impolite to introduce even the mention of it into company. How few in Chriſtian countries, comparatively ſpeaking, attend the ordinances of *Chriſt*, or pay any regard to the public worſhip of God?---What are the lives of the generality, but a courſe of mere extravaganee, ſenſuality, and diſſipation--- of enquiry how they may provide for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſts thereof---what they ſhall eat, or drink, and wherewithal they ſhall be clothed, without a ſa-

gle ſerious thought about the ſtate of their ſouls, or eternity? If we enquire into the ſource of mirth and pleaſantry in moſt companies, ſhall we not find the laugh almoſt perpetually raiſed, either at the expence of religion, or at the natural or moral failings and infirmities of our fellow-creatures? Subjects which drew tears from the eyes of *David*, and which no right mind can contemplate, without pain and anxiety! Indeed, what is modern wit and gaiety, but calumny, ſlander and profanity, rendered laughable, by the ludicrous garb in which they are dreſſed?---To all this, may I not add, that ſome of the moſt ſcandalous and filthy vices are become ſo common and faſhionable in Chriſtian countries, that to reſiſt or decline them, would be deemed an almoſt unpardonable ſingularity.

Surely nothing more need be added to prove, That the *world* in which Chriſtians live, is 'a crooked and perverſe genera-'tion;'---that to follow the multitude, is to renounce the guidance of reaſon and religion; and that to be conformed to this evil world, in its general cuſtoms, maxims and manners, is to imitate the very worſt examples, and to forfeit all that glory and happineſs which the goſpel has ſet before us. I am now to lay before you, under the

II. Head of diſcourſe, The *Chriſtian's deſtination* in this *evil world*;...or, *what*

purposes he is *designed* and *appointed* to ſerve in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation.—'He is to ſhine as a light in 'the world, holding forth the word of life.' Upon ſuch a view of things, Chriſtians may poſſibly ſay, 'Since *such* is the world in 'which we live;—ſince human ſociety is 'ſo impoiſoned and corrupted, let us ſhun 'the contagion:—Let us break off all com-'merce with the living:—Let us abandon 'the ſociety of men, and, like hermits, ſe-'cure our innocence in obſcurity and re-'tirement, in the ſolitude of deſarts and 'caves of the earth.' By no means, ſays St. *Paul*. Man is a ſocial creature, and is deſigned for ſociety: Flee not, therefore, from the deſtination of Providence: Continue in that world where the example of your virtue is ſo neceſſary: Labor to diſabuſe and undeceive your fellow-mortals, and to prevent them, if poſſible, from falling into miſery: Let your life, your converſation, and your whole deportment, be a reproach to their vices, and a light to direct their feet into the paths of peace, holineſs and happineſs: 'Shine as lights in the world; 'holding forth, in your example and beha-'vior the word of life, for the direction and 'inſtruction of others.'

The Greek word, which we tranſlate *light*, has a peculiar energy in the text. It is compounded of two words, which ſignify

an elevated light, or a *light held up*, for the guidance and direction of others. The Apoſtle probably alludes to the ancient *Pharos*, a *tower* or *light-house*, built by *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, on an iſland of the ſame name, in the mouth of the river *Nile* in *Egypt*, on the top of which a fire was kept continually kindled in the night, to direct veſſels into the harbor. The alluſion, *my brethren*, is very plain and very beautiful. The Chriſtian ſerves as a *guide* and *director* to a crooked and perverſe generation. Elevated above the falſe maxims and corrupt manners of the world, he holds forth before him the word of life; *i. e.* he *ſhows* and *manifeſts*, by his example, *that* which the word of God demands of us, in order to our entering into life eternal.

The *word of* God is termed,* 'A light 'to our feet and a lamp to our paths,' becauſe it gives us direction in the whole of our conduct. When our temporal and eternal intereſt claſh and interfere with each other, it puts that important and ſignificant queſtion, 'What ſhall it profit a man, if he 'gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?' In the time of affliction, it calls us to *conſider*, 'and to humble ourſelves un-'der the mighty hand of God, that he may 'exalt us in due ſeaſon.'—Under the influence of riches and proſperity, it directs us,

* *Pſal.* cxix. 105.

'not to truſt in uncertain riches:—to be 'rich in the good works of charity and li-'berality—to be good ſtewards of the ma-'nifold grace of GOD; willing to diſtri-'bute; ready to communicate:—To make 'unto ourſelves friends of the mammon of 'unrighteouſneſs, that when we fail here, 'they may receive us into everlaſting habi-'tations.'—On a death-bed, and in the near proſpect of eternity, it is a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths—by repreſenting death as a *conquered disarmed* tyrant;—by opening an eternal world of glory to the faith of the Chriſtian;—by aſſuring him that when 'his heart and his fleſh fail, GOD 'will be the ſtrength of his heart and his 'portion for ever;—that bleſſed are the 'dead, who die in the Lord, for they do reſt 'from their labor and their works do follow 'them.'

Now, that which *David* ſays of the *word of* GOD, St. *Paul* here ſays of the *deſtination of the Chriſtian.* As GOD hath given his word to be a light to men's feet and a lamp to their paths,—to guide their feet into the way of peace and happineſs,—ſo he hath alſo deſtined and appointed Chriſtians, 'to ſhine as lights in the world, in 'the midſt of a crooked and perverſe gene-'ration.'—practically *holding forth*, and *examplifying* the word of life, for their guidance and direction.

The Chriſtian's life and converſation ſhould be the word of God reduced to practice; a living comment on the word of life; ſo that the ignorant and wicked world, who either cannot or will not read the word of God, may ſee it clearly held forth, and plainly examplified in the life of the Chriſtian. And indeed, *my brethren*, what have the lives of the ſaints been, in all ages, but juſt a *holding forth of this word of life?* They have preached more powerfully and more effectually, by their lives and examples, than their doctrines, to thoſe crooked and perverſe generations, among whom they ſhone as lights in the world. God hath *ſet them up*, in every age and generation, as *beacons* and *Pharoſes*, to ſtem the torrent of human depravity and corruption;—to ſhew the practicability of virtue in human nature;—to be a reproof and reproach to prevailing vice and immorality, cauſing iniquity, as aſhamed, to hide its face,...and to allure mankind into the paths of virtue and happineſs.

Would we ſee, for inſtance, the preference which the intereſts of *eternity* ſhould have to thoſe of *time*; let us behold it examplified in the conduct of Moſes, "Who "refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's "daughter; chooſing rather to ſuffer af- "fliction with the people of God, than to "*enjoy* the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon;

"eſteeming the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than the treaſures of *Egypt*, because he had reſpect to the recompence of reward."—In the lives of *Abraham* and *Joshua*, we have the nobleſt examples of pious maſters of families: "As for me, (ſays *Joshua*) and my houſe, we will ſerve the Lord." "For I know *Abraham*, (ſays GOD) that he will command his children, and his houſhold after him, to keep the way of the Lord, and to do juſtice and judgment.*"—In king *David*, the moſt fervent piety and animated devotion ſhine forth conſpicuouſly.—*Job* taught the world, in his day, that *dutiful submission*, *entire reſignation*, which we owe to the will of GOD in times of the deepeſt calamity and affliction.; "What! ſhall we receive good at the hand of GOD, and ſhall we not receive evil alſo; the LORD giveth, and the LORD taketh away, and bleſſed be the name of the LORD.†" In *Zaccheus* we have a bright example of the proper uſe of riches, and the great duty of reſtitution;—"Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man, by falſe accuſation, I reſtore him four-fold: ‡" And in the life of St. *Paul* himſelf, we have

* Gen. xvii. 19. Joſh. xxiv. 15.
† Job i 21.——ii. 10.
‡ Luke xix. 8.

examplified a whole conſtellation of Chriſtian virtues and duties;....the moſt exemplary humility, patience and ſelf-denial;.... unparalelled zeal and diligence in promoting the glory of GOD, and the ſalvation of men,—and the moſt earneſt deſire "of being abſent from the body and preſent with "the LORD."—All theſe anſwered the deſignation of divine providence, and fulfilled this poſitive and active part of their Chriſtian calling:....All theſe were *burning* and *ſhining lights* in the world; holding forth the word of life to thoſe *crooked and perverse generations*, among whom divine providence had ſtationed and placed them.

Nor, *my brethren*, was *this duty peculiar* to theſe *great lights* of the *ancient world*; it is equally the duty, the honor and the intereſt of every individual Chriſtian to the end of time, to be a *burning and a ſhining light* in his day and generation, and thus to *hold forth the word of life*, to the crooked and perverſe generation, among whom he is ſtationed by divine providence.

Many Chriſtians, indeed, are not able to *build churches*, to *found hoſpitals*, to *preach* or defend the goſpel, or to propagate it to diſtant parts of the world:....but every Chriſtian is ſurely able to live a good, virtuous and exemplary life....Every Chriſtian is able "to adorn the doctrine of GOD his Savior," *to exhibit* the virtues and graces of genuine

Chriſtianity;....to encourage virtue and piety, and diſcountenance vice and immorality as far as his influence and example can reach. And this is every Chriſtian's duty: "Let your light, (ſays *Chriſt*, the "great Lord and law-giver of Chriſtians) "ſo ſhine before men, that others ſeeing "your good works, may glorify your Fa- "ther in heaven.—Be ye harmleſs and "blameleſs, (ſays the Apoſtle) the children "of GOD without rebuke, in the midſt of "a crooked and perverſe generation.—— "Have your converſation honeſt among the "Gentiles; (ſays St. Peter) having a good "conſcience, that whereas they ſpeak evil "of you, as of evil doers, they may be "aſhamed that falſely accuſe your good con- "verſation in *Chriſt*—and may, by your "good works which they ſhall behold, glo- "rify GOD in the day of viſitation."

Theſe ſcriptures, *my brethren*, while they point out the duty of Chriſtians, alſo ſhew the propriety and expediency of it. It is proper, it is fit and expedient, that Chriſtians ſhould maintain and preſerve an immaculate and exemplary character...that the goſpel may not be blamed;...that their profeſſion may not be diſgraced;...that ſinners may be reclaimed, and that the church may be edified. They owe this duty to GOD, to themſelves, to the Church, and to that crooked and perverſe generation,

among whom GOD, hath placed them as *lights*, to hold forth the word of life.

This is the *positive part* of the Chriſtian's duty. He is to be *actively*, *holy* and *exemplary*, in all manner of life and converſation; and that, not merely from the ſelfiſh and contracted view of ſecuring his own ſalvation;...but alſo, from the more *catholic* and *charitable* motive of promoting the ſalvation of his fellow men; that he may proſecute the *noble* and GOD-*like* deſign of ſaving both himſelf and thoſe who behold his good converſation in *Chriſt*.... Proceed we now,

III. To the *negative* duty of a Chriſtian, in order to his anſwering this deſtination of providence: 'He is to live harmleſs and 'blameleſs, as the child of GOD, without 'rebuke.'

Theſe words muſt be underſtood *here* (as indeed every where elſe in ſcripture when applied to men) not in their moſt rigid and and ſtrictly literal meaning, as implying a *ſinleſs perfection*: For, alas! in this ſenſe, 'there is not a juſt man upon earth, who 'doeth good and ſinneth not. In many 'things we all offend: And if we ſay we 'have *no ſin*, we are *liars* and the *truth is* '*not in us*.' They muſt therefore be underſtood in a *qualified ſenſe*, as only implying *goſpel ſincerity* and *evangelical righteouſneſs*. 'Be ye harmleſs, blameleſs and

irreproachable as the children of GOD;' that is, 'pay a *constant regard* to the laws 'of that great Maſter whom you ſerve, ſo far 'as human weakneſs and infirmity will per-'mit; and let it appear evidently even by 'the very nature of thoſe failings and ſhort-'comings which the weakneſs and imper-'fection of your nature ſometimes betrays 'you into, that your ſins are not *deliberate* 'and *allowed*, proceeding from a *ſpirit of* 'rebellion; but ariſing wholly from the '*weakness* and *infirmity* of your nature, 'in the preſent imperfect ſtate.' It is ſaid emphatically of the *wicked*,* 'They have 'corrupted themſelves; their ſpot is not 'the ſpot of GOD'S children; they are a 'perverſe and crooked generation.' GOD'S *children*, it ſeems, have *their ſpots;* but they are not the ſpots of the wicked. They ſin not cordially, preſumptuouſly, allowedly, nor perſeveringly. They love holineſs and purſue it, as far as the weakneſs and infirmity of their nature will permit. It is their honeſt and hearty endeavor, 'to 'be harmleſs and blameleſs, the children 'of GOD, without a rebuke;' and with the charitable and right-thinking part of mankind, they generally obtain a good report, an irreproachable character. A real Chriſtian can join *Job*, with ſome ſincerity, in ſaying: 'I will not remove my integrity from me;

* Deut. xxxii. 5.

'my righteouſneſs I hold faſt, and will not 'let it go: My heart ſhall not reproach me 'ſo long as I live.' And what was predicated of *Job*, may, with ſome propriety, be ſaid of *him*; 'That he is a perfect man, 'and an upright one; who feareth GOD 'and eſcheweth evil.'* It will be his great ambition and earneſt endeavor, as a child of GOD, not only to imbibe the temper and diſpoſition of a child, crying Abba Father; but alſo to imitate his heavenly Father in all thoſe virtues and graces which conſtitute his moral character, being *holy* as GOD is *holy*, *pure* as he is *pure*, and *merciful* as he is *merciful*, in all manner of life and converſation.

In vain, *my fellow-Chriſtians*, do we *aſſume the character* of being the *children of* GOD.—*In vain* are we the expectants of a glorious immortality, in conſequence of this aſſumed character:—and, *in vain* do we impoſe on a credulous world, by this hollow and hypocritical profeſſion, while we are unlike our heavenly Father in the temper of our minds, and the conduct of our lives; while, inſtead of being *harmleſs blameleſs*, *unrebukeable* and *exemplary*, we continue to be a *perverſe* and *crooked generation*, and have lives and converſations all blurr'd over with the *ſpots of the wicked*. Indignant heaven muſt juſtly ſpurn ſuch af-

Job i. 1.——xxvii. 6.

frontive infolence; and that *omniscient* GOD, who requires *truth in the heart*, and *sincerity in the inward part*, will appoint us our portion with hypocrites, where ſhall be weeping and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth. But I have already treſpaſſed too long on your patience, and ſhall beg leave to conclude, by addreſſing my moſt tender exhortations to *two sorts of persons*; And, 1*st*, To ſuch of you, *my brethren*, who, by your Chriſtian profeſſion, and by a correſpondent exemplary life, have the honor of ſhining as lights, in the midſt of a crooked and perverſe generation, holding forth the word of life.

I call you, my brethren, to conſider the *grand* and *sublime* of your Chriſtian character and calling. When St. *Paul* would animate his ſon *Timothy* to a zealous diſcharge of the duties of his miniſtry, he tells him, "Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto "thy doctrine: For, in doing this, thou "ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, and them that hear "thee.*" He makes him a kind of ſubordinate ſaviour; a fellow-laborer and fellow-worker with CHRIST, in the glorious work of human redemption.

But what *Timothy did by his ministry*, every Chriſtian is called, in our text, to do by his *example*. If, indeed, *my brethren*, you are "harmleſs and blameleſs, the chil-"dren of GOD, without rebuke, in the midſt

* 1 *Tim.* iv. 16.

" of a crooked and perverſe generation," " among whom you ſhine as lights in the " world, holding forth the word of life," you ſhall not only *save yourſelves*, but alſo be highly inſtrumental in *saving others*. And oh! what an *honor*, what a bleſſedneſs is this?....In purſuing this deſign, you enter into the plan of redemption, and partake of the honors of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Redeemer;....you do a *work* the moſt pleaſing to GOD; the moſt profitable to yourſelves, and the moſt beneficial to your fellow-creatures:....A *work* which employed the counſels of GOD from all eternity; —and a *work*, on which he laviſhed (if I may ſo ſpeak with reverence) the life and blood of his dear ſon; I mean, the ſalvation of poor mortals.

By *this divine* and *God like labor* of love, you are alſo brightning your immortal crowns and doubling your eternal rewards. 'For what is our hopes, (ſays *St. Paul*, to 'the *Theſſalonians*) or our joy, or our crown 'of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the pre-'ſence of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, at his 'coming? For ye are our glory and our joy'...In like manner, *my brethren*, thoſe ſouls, to whoſe ſalvation you have contributed, by your virtuous and pious examples, will be your crown, your joy, and your glory, through eternal ages. In thoſe *regions* of perfect love, you will be happy,

not only in ſeeing the happineſs of thoſe whom you loved here, but alſo having promoted their eternal happineſs;...in having preſerved them from the contagion of the age;—in having recovered them from a crooked and perverſe generation, and in having ſnatched them as brands from the burning.—And O! my friends, can there be any difficulty unconquerable...any virtue too ſevere...any ſelf-denial too painful with ſuch motives as theſe before your eyes? Is it poſſible, that any frivolous pleaſure, or trifling emolument of ſin, ſhould have power or influence enough to rob you of this glory, this joy, and this crown of rejoicing? I would,...

2. Beg leave to addreſs myſelf in a few words, to ſuch as are unhappy enough ſtill to make a part of that crooked and perverſe generation, amidſt whom the few righteous ſhine as lights in the world.

My unhappy fellow-ſinners! Let me beſeech you in the ſpirit of *love* and *meekneſs*, to enter into the views of providence, who has ſet thoſe eminent examples of virtue and piety before your eyes! For what reaſon hath God the Father of mercies, kindled up ſo many *burning* and *ſhining lights* in this world of his...Men of our own nature and make, adorned with ſo many conſpicuous virtues—who have been ornaments to human nature, and benefactors

to the world?—Is it only that we ſhould behold them with an eye of *envy* and *contempt?* Is it only that we ſhould blacken their characters, and purſue them with calumny and ſlander; thus aggravating our own guilt and condemnation?—Is it not that we ſhould emulate their virtues, imitate their examples, and be corrected, reformed and inſtructed by their manners?

Let us *blush* to think that men of the *ſame common nature* with ourſelves; compoſed of the ſame fleſh and blood; animated with the ſame paſſions, and born heirs of the ſame corruptions and infirmities, ſhould have yet ſo far outſtripped us, in every thing *noble*, GOD-*like*, *rational* and *divine?*—Are not the ſame ſuccours, the ſame promiſes of aid and aſſiſtance, the ſame ſources of grace, virtue and holineſs, open to us, as were to *Abraham*, to *Moſes*, to *Job*, to *Elijah*, to *Paul*; and as are to all the good, the virtuous, the pious, and exemplary, of this as well as every foregoing age? Wherefore then do we not avail ourſelves of theſe advantages?...Is there any aſſignable reaſon why any of our fellow-creatures ſhould outdo us in any thing *amiable*, *lovely*, *virtuous*, *praiſe-worthy*, and *of good report?*... Why any of our fellow-men ſhould excel us in the care of their own ſouls, or of the ſouls of their fellow-creatures? 'The ſaints, 'are the excellent ones of the earth, in

'whom ſhould be all our delight;' Let us reſpect their virtues: Let us cheriſh their acquaintance: Let us love their ſociety, and follow their examples. Too, too long have we ſcandalized the church, it is now time we ſhould edify it. Too, too long have we labored for the deſtruction of our fellow-men, it is now time we ſhould labor for their converſion and ſalvation. Too, too long have we been *joined to this crooked and perverse generation; this world which lies in wickedness.* It is now time we ſhould ſhine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life, for the guidance and direction of thoſe whom our bypaſt evil examples have perverted and confirmed in their wickedneſs!

To conclude in one word: Let me addreſs that exhortation to all of you, *my dear hearers*, which St. *Peter* addreſſed to the Jews—"Save yourſelves from this unto-"ward generation."—Deliver yourſelves from their *principles*, *maxims*, *customs* and *manners*; from their *ſins* and from their *judgments*.—"Make haſte, flee for your "lives, leſt ye periſh." May GOD, the merciful Father of our ſpirits, give weight to this exhortation, and ſet it home powerfully upon each of our conſciences; and to his great name ſhall be the eternal praiſe through JESUS CHRIST our only Lord and Redeemer. Amen and Amen.

ESSAY LXI.

THE AGGRAVATED GUILT OF MURDER;

A SERMON.

FROM EXODUS XX. 13.

Thou shalt not kill.

IT may perhaps be deemed a little unſeaſonable and impolite to handle a ſubject of this kind, before a civilized and chriſtianized aſſembly. Methinks, I hear ſome of my hearers object, and ſay, 'You pay 'us but a rude and unwelcome compli-'ment, by even ſuppoſing us capable of 'committing ſuch an atrocious and unna-'tural crime as this. Murder! The ſhed-'ding of innocent blood! Our blood runs 'chill and freezes at the very thought of it. 'No; GOD forbid! Our hearts are too ten-'der and humane ever to harbor ſuch a de-'ſign, or liſten to ſuch a temptation!'

There was a time, *my hearers*, when moſt murderers could doubtleſs have ſaid all this, with as much *confidence* and *ſincerity* as any of us now can, and when their very *ſouls* would have ſhuddered at the thoughts

of committing ſo great a wickedneſs. But there was alſo a time when the increaſed ſtrength of their corruptions hurried them on to commit it with greedineſs, and under the moſt aggravated circumſtances of guilt.

Alas! we little know the *deceitfulness* and *desperate wickedness* of our own hearts, or the *depth* and *inveteracy* of our corruptions, when we imagine ourſelves above the danger or poſſibility of committing the greateſt and moſt atrocious crimes. 'The 'heart, (ſays the prophet) is deceitful 'above all things and deſperately wicked; 'who can know it? It ſtarts aſide like a 'broken bow.'*

We look upon murder, (and juſtly) as the moſt atrocious crime which can be committed by man,...we have no compaſſion for the perſons of murderers, but regard them as *monsters of iniquity*, who have even no claim to *human pity*:....But I am perſuaded, *my friends*, that nothing but the reſtraining grace of God, prevents multitudes, who are thus *merciless* in their judgment of others, from committing the very ſame crime. '*Cruel man!*....Thou 'haſt no mercy on thy fellow-ſinners! '....Thou thinkeſt him unworthy the pity 'either of God or man!....Thou deemeſt 'it impoſſible for thee to fall into the ſame 'wickedneſs!....Yet thou art *proud, impe-*

* Jer. xvii. 9.

'*rious*, *intolerant* and *unforgiving!* Yet 'thy ſoul often *boils*, *ferments*, and '*rankles* with the paſſions of *anger*, *fury*, '*revenge*, *envy* and *malice prepense* againſt 'thy neighbor! Yet thou prayeſt for his 'damnation, and diviſeſt evil againſt him, 'and wiſheſt him dead, becauſe he ſtands 'in the way of ſome gratification, or has 'wounded thy imaginary honor, or hurt 'thy pride! Be it known unto thee, *O* '*blind* and *merciless man*, that *thou art the* '*very murderer* whom thou condemneſt 'without pity; and that nothing but ſome '*prudential motive*, or rather, the *reſtraining* '*grace of* GOD, bridling thine outrageous 'paſſions, for the ſafety and ſecurity of hu-'man ſociety, prevents thee from perpe-'trating the very fact thyſelf, which thou 'thinkeſt *unpardonable* in *another*.'

Thou ſhalt not kill, ſays GOD.

It would be paying a bad compliment to the underſtandings of my hearers, to take up much of your time in ſhewing you.... That there are many circumſtances, wherein the taking away of human life, is not to be deemed *ſinful* or *criminal*;.... ſuch as *chance-medley*, when one man takes away the life of another, by *mere accident*, without any *knowledge* or *deſign* in the action; ....or *man-ſlaughter*, *on one's own defence*, when a man from a principle of *ſelf-preſervation*, is, as it were, compelled to take

away the life of another who aſſaults him unprovoked, in order to ſave his own. The ſame alſo happens in *a lawful, defenſive war*, when men are forced to deſtroy an invading enemy, in defence of their own lives, liberties and properties;....or, *laſtly*, when men have forfeited their lives, by ſuch crimes as eſſentially affect the public good and ſafety, and which are adjudged worthy of death, by laws *human and divine*. In all theſe caſes, and perhaps in ſome others, the taking away of human life, is ſo far from being criminal, that it may be a duty which we owe to GOD, *our neighbor* and *ourſelves!*

The crime therefore *here* forbidden by GOD, and which is emphatically expreſſed in the Engliſh language by the word murder, is the *ſhedding of innocent blood;*.... or 'wilfully and felonioufly killing of another, upon prepenſed malice; whether 'ſecretly or openly; whether ourſelves, or by others.' And this prepenſed malice, is either, (1.) Expreſs, when it may be evidently proved, that there was ill-will;—or (2.) Implied; when one kills another ſuddenly, having nothing to defend himſelf: For, in ſuch a caſe, the law juſtly preſumes, that there muſt have been *malice*.—*To this* may alſo be added, the atrocious crime of *ſuicide*, or a man's laying violent hands upon himſelf;—as alſo

duelling, which contains in it the eſſence and guilt of both the above crimes.

In farther improving this ſubject, I ſhall, I. *A little* expoſe the heinous and aggravated guilt of murder.—II. Shew you that it is a crime juſtly puniſhable by death. —III. Endeavor to expoſe thoſe *paſſions*, *tempers* and *practices* which lead to it. I am,

I. A little to open and *expoſe* the *heinous* and *aggravated guilt* of murder. And this may be ſhown 1ſt, From the very *nature* and *conſequences* of the crime itſelf; and 2dly, From the light in which both the *word of* God, and the *conſciences of men* repreſent it. And,

1. From the very nature and conſequences of the crime itſelf. (1.) Man is fearfully and wonderfully made; *made*, we are told, in the *image* and *likeneſs* of God. Man is God's offspring and *repreſentative* on this earth. His body is, perhaps, the nobleſt piece of divine workmanſhip; and God, when he had made it, breathed into it the breath of life, and made it *a living* and *intelligent image* of *himſelf!* Now to break to pieces this *living temple;*—to *deface*, *undo*, and, as much as in us is, *wantonly to deſtroy* this workmanſhip of God; —to ſeparate this ſoul and body whom God hath joined together;—to diſunite and *take down* this tabernacle, which God hath *built* and ſet up, by a miracle of his power,

wiſdom and goodneſs;....what a *daring* crime? What an *audacious* wickedneſs? All our power, wiſdom and contrivance cannot give *form*, *exiſtence* or *life* to a worm; and ſhall we dare to deſtroy a fellow-man? Shall we preſume to take away, in the wantonneſs of our pride and paſſion, that which all the powers on earth, and all the angels in heaven cannot give?

(2.) That GOD *makes nothing in vain*, is a maxim not to be diſputed. Who knows the deſtiny of a human creature, or for what purpoſes Providence may have deſigned? Preſumptuous, ſhort-ſighted mortals that we are, we are apt to pronounce a being worthleſs and uſeleſs, on whom his Maker may ſet much value, and by whom he may do great things! When we ſee *Saul perſecuting the church*, and aſſiſting in the ſtoning of *Stephen*, we may adjudge him worthy of death, and think the world would be well rid of ſuch a monſter; yet this very *Saul* was *a chosen veſſel*, who was to proſelyte half the Roman empire to JESUS! How many wicked and worthleſs men, have become benefactors to the world and ornaments to humanity!

How many peſts to human ſociety have become fathers of children, who have done honor to human nature, and become the ſaviours of their country?—This ſhould teach us not to deſpiſe the meaneſt of the

creatures of GOD, or the wickedeſt of men, who are ſtill in a place of repentance. But the murderer does what in him lies to defeat the deſigns of GOD's providence, and cut off the purpoſes of his will. True, he can never effect this: 'GOD's counſel 'ſhall ſtand, and the thoughts of his heart 'to all generations: For there is neither 'wiſdom or device, or counſel againſt the 'Lord!'—Yet no thanks to the murderer for this—who, in the rage and wantonneſs of his paſſion, cuts off a human creature, who, for all he knew or conſidered, might have been appointed by GOD to anſwer the nobleſt purpoſes, and to bring about the nobleſt deſigns in the world!

'Cruel and inhuman mother!—Knoweſt 'thou how uſeful, how worthy, how orna-'mental a member of ſociety, that child 'might have proved, whom thou art now 'about to *ſtrangle* or *abandon* to certain 'death—to what honors, to what happineſs, 'to what uſefulneſs, to what degrees of fu-'ture glory it might have been advanced!' 'Vile and *ſavage barbarian*, who, for the 'ſlighteſt provocation, or to gratify the 'moſt diabolical revenge, art juſt about to 'plunge the murderous ſteel into thy neigh-'bor's bowels, or to level him to the earth 'by a leaden death!...Stop thy hand till 'thou haſt conſidered, That thou art now '*about* to rob helpleſs children of a father

'...a helpleſs wife, of her provider...the 'poor and needy, of a helper...his friends, 'of a friend, and the world, perhaps, of a 'more uſeful member of ſociety than thy 'worthleſs ſelf.'

(3.) The chief end and deſign of this world and ſtate is, that men ſhould prepare and provide for a better and an eternal world. Human life was given chiefly for this purpoſe, and would be worth nothing on any other ſuppoſition. I may even affirm it, with confidence, that it would be unworthy of the wiſdom and goodneſs of GOD to create ſuch a being as man, and to expoſe him to the many calamities and afflictions of this life, *merely* for the ſmall portion of pleaſure and happineſs which he enjoys in it.

Life *human life*, is a *time* and *space* of *trial* and *probation* for eternity. In this view of it, human life is an *invaluable treaſure*, and every moment of it is of the *utmoſt importance!* For this purpoſe the Pſalmiſt importunately prays; "*Lord*, cut "me not off in the midſt of my days; thy "years are throughout all generations."* For this purpoſe we pray againſt *ſudden deaths;* leſt we ſhould be hurried into eternity, and before the judgment ſeat, with our ſins upon us, and in an unprepared ſtate.

But, now, the murderer robs us of all our precious time,—ſends us ſuddenly and un-

* Pſal. cii. 24.

expectedly before the tribunal of GOD, without the poſſibility of a GOD *have mercy*; and perhaps, plunges us, impenitent, into an everlaſting hell of miſery and deſpair!...O! *what reſtitution* can be made in this caſe! What reparation for this injury! If any guilt can look too big for divine mercy, it muſt be ſuch guilt as this!

What can *our ſorrow*, what can *our tears*, what can *even our blood* do towards atoning ſuch aggravated guilt as this? Can we redeem this ſoul from hell? Can we again give it a new ſtate of trial and probation; or one hour wherein to work out its own ſalvation?

(4.) This is a crime againſt *humanity*; a crime againſt all the ſoft, tender and ſympathetic feelings of the heart! It ſpeaks an infatuated underſtanding, a hard heart, a ſeared conſcience!...A man muſt firſt kill himſelf as it were; do violence to all his feelings, as a man; have totally diveſted himſelf of his humanity before he could imbrue his hands in the blood of his fellow-creature, his neighbor, his friend, his brother of the human race.

(5.) It is a crime truly *diabolical*. The *devil* was a murderer from the beginning; and hence he is called *Abaddon* and *Apollyon*, the *deſtroyer*. *Envy*, *malice* and *revenge*, from which murder ſprings, as from *its* proper ſource, are paſſions *truly diaboli-*

dal; and a man muſt indeed be a *devil incarnate*, before he can coolly premeditate murder, and take pleaſure, or enjoy gratification, in ſpilling innocent blood. And this is the infamous glory of thoſe, who ſcruple not to declare, that *revenge is sweet!* If there be, indeed, a pleaſure in this kind of revenge, it is truly the pleaſure of devil, and perhaps the only ſpecies of a pleaſure of which a devil is capable!

(6.) Great and *horrible* as the crime of murder is *in itself*, yet there are many circumſtances which may exceedingly aggravate and increaſe its guilt; from the time when, and place where it is committed; from the perſons upon whom, and deliberate manner in which it is perpetrated. Perhaps it was a poor innocent, a helpleſs infant! Perhaps it was an aged, indulgent father, or the child of our bowels! Perhaps it was a brother, or a friend who ſticketh cloſer than a brother, and whom we ought to have protected at the hazard of life! Perhaps it was done deliberately, in cold blood, after long premeditation, and for ſome ſlight provocation, or upon ſome mere punctilio of honor! Perhaps it was the father of a family, whoſe helpleſs children depended wholly upon his life for their ſupport! Theſe, and a number of other circumſtances, render this crime exceedingly heinous.

2. The aggravated guilt of murder far-

ther appears from the light in which both the *word of* God, and the conſciences of men, repreſent it. When *Cain* ſlew his brother *Abel*—"The LORD ſaid, what haſt thou "done? The voice of thy brother's blood "cryeth unto me from the ground. And "now thou art curſed from the earth, "which hath opened her mouth to receive "thy brother's blood from thy hand.*— "Your blood of your lives will I require, "at the hand of every beaſt will I require "it; and at the hand of man, at the hand "of every man's brother will I require the "life of man."†

It is a crime of a *deep die*, and of a *crimſon color*;—a *land-polluting*, *land-defiling* ſin. 'Ye ſhall not pollute the land where-'in ye are, for blood it defileth the land, 'and the land cannot be cleanſed of the 'blood that is ſhed therein, but by the 'blood of him that ſhed it.'‡ 'By ſwearing, 'and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and 'committing adultery, they break out, and 'blood toucheth blood: Therefore ſhall 'the land mourn, and every one that dwel-'leth therein ſhall languiſh.'‖ 'Ye know, '(ſays the Apoſtle,) that no murderer hath 'eternal life abiding in him.'** And how earneſtly does the Pſalmiſt pray, 'Deliver 'me, O LORD, from blood-guiltineſs.'††—

* Gen. iv.
† Gen. ix.
‡ Exod. xxi. 12,—15.
‖ Hoſ. iv. 2, 3.
** 1 John iii. 15.
†† Pſal. li.

'Surely, at the command of the LORD came 'this upon *Judah*, to remove them out of 'his ſight, for the ſins of *Manasseh*, and for 'the innocent blood which he ſhed: For, 'he filled *Jerusalem* with innocent blood, 'which the LORD would not pardon!'*

The heinouſneſs of this crime is alſo manifeſt from *thoſe terrors of conſcience* which generally follow the commiſſion of it. How dreadful was the caſe of *Cain*? 'My puniſhment, (ſays he) is greater than I am 'able to bear;—from thy face ſhall I be 'hid, and I ſhall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it ſhall come to 'paſs that every one that findeth me ſhall 'ſlay me.'†—How piercing is the lamentation of unhappy *Lamech*? 'Hear my 'voice, ye wives of *Lamech*, hearken to 'my ſpeech: for I have ſlain a man to my 'wounding, and a young man to my hurt! 'If *Cain* ſhall be avenged ſeven fold, ſurely '*Lamech* ſeventy and ſeven-fold!' (See how his terrors are multiplied, from a ſenſe of his guilt!‡)—the ſame truth might be illuſtrated from the hiſtory of *Joſeph's brethren*—of *David*—of *King Herod*—of *Pontius Pilate*...of *Judas* the traitor, and of many other murderers, in profane hiſtory. Indeed it is very remarkable, that *manſlayers* are haunted with the moſt frightful terrors, which leave them little eaſe or peace

* 2 Kings xxiv. 3, 4. † Gen. iv. 14. ‡ Gen. iv. 24.

of mind; and that many of thoſe who have perpetrated the moſt horrid murders, in the moſt ſecret manner, have been driven by theſe terrors, to *betray their guilt*, to confeſs *their crimes*, and to die for them, rather than enjoy a life, wholly inſupportable!

Nor, my friends, are theſe terrors *vain things*:—They have their ground in the very conſtitution of our nature, and in that moral law which GOD hath written on the human heart. They are *peculiar* to *men*, to *moral agents*, *accountable creatures*: And *that* GOD, who hath implanted them in the human breaſt, muſt be a *liar* and a *deceiver*, (with all reverence be it ſpoken) if theſe terrors have not an object in nature, and if they are not the forerunners of future puniſhment! I ſhould now, in the

II. Place, ſhew you that this is a crime juſtly puniſhable by death. But indeed, this is a truth almoſt too obvious to need either *proof* or *illuſtration*. Surely, if there is any *capital crime* committed among men, *murder* is that crime. The divine law is expreſs in the matter, and ſeems to inſiſt on the death of the murderer, at the riſk of the community, without leaving any room or plea for mercy. 'At the 'hand of every man's brother will I require 'the life of man: Whoſo ſheddeth man's 'blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed.'*

* *Gen. ix. 6.*

'He that ſmiteth a man that he die, he ſhall 'ſurely be put to death.—He ſhall have no 'refuge.—Thou ſhalt even take him from 'mine altar, that he may die.† Ye ſhall 'take no ſatisfaction for the life of a mur-'derer; but he ſhall be ſurely put to death. 'Ye ſhall not pollute the land wherein ye 'are; it cannot be cleanſed of the blood 'ſhed therein, but by the blood of him that 'ſhed it.'‡ The moſt barbarous nations, even from the light of nature and reaſon, have always deemed murder worthy of death —as appears from the hiſtory of *Jonah* and the *mariners*—and the *Barbarians* of the iſland *Melita*, who, when they ſaw a viper faſten on the hand of *Paul*, ſaid, 'No doubt 'this man is a murderer, whom, though he 'hath eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuf-'fereth not to live.'‖

The ſame paſſions and barbarity of temper which have led a man to commit *one murder*, may lead him to commit many;—and ſuch are the dreadful conſequences of this crime, that it would be dangerous to ſpare the life of ſuch a criminal, unleſs we could be aſſured of his true converſion, which is a matter not eaſily aſcertained: And therefore no ſecurity could be given to ſociety, for his future good behavior.

† Exod. xxi. Lev. xxiv.
‡ Deut. xix. Exod. xxi.
‖ Acts xxviii. 4.

It is very remarkable, that above all crimes, *murder* ſeldom goes unpuniſhed even in this life; Providence often ſtrangely ſo ordering it that thoſe who have committed this crime in the moſt *ſecret manner*, have frequently been diſcovered by the moſt ſurpriſing means, and brought to condign puniſhment, often many years after the commiſſion of the fact.

Since, therefore, *my brethren*, murder is ſuch an atrocious crime, and condemned by the laws of GOD and *man* to ſo ſhameful and ignominious a puniſhment; how careful ought we to be, both as *men* and *Chriſtians*, to mortify ſuch *paſſions* and *tempers*, and ſhun ſuch *practices* as tempt and lead to it?—To *expoſe theſe*, therefore, in a practical manner, and to caution my hearers againſt them, is the

III. And laſt head of diſcourſe propoſed.

1. Then let us ſet a ſtrict watch *over our hearts*, in their very inmoſt thoughts, deſires and *movements*. *Out of the heart*, ſays the wiſe man, *are the iſſues of life*. This is the *cockatrice's neſt*, where all the viperous brood of malignant paſſions are hatched and brought forth. How often has an unfriendly thought, harbored there, boiled up into malice and broke out into *murder*?—We are apt to think little of anger, and freely to indulge it: With *Jonah*, we *think* we do well to be angry: We let

the ſun go down on our wrath—and keep it from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month, fermenting in our boſoms: We call to mind every circumſtance that may aggravate our wrath, and brood upon it in our minds night and day, 'till it rankles and feſters into malice—never conſidering, that anger and malice are the very *ſeeds of murder*—nay, that they are *murder* itſelf in GOD's account, and by the determination of the goſpel of *Chriſt!*—What ſays *Chriſt?* "Ye have heard, that "it hath been ſaid by them of old time, "Thou ſhalt not kill: But I ſay unto you, "whoſoever is angry with his brother with-"out a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judg-"ment: And whoſoever ſhall ſay unto his "brother, *Raca* ſhall be in danger of the "council: But whoſoever ſhall ſay, thou "fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire.*" We are commanded to be angry and not ſin; and cautioned not to let the ſun go down upon our wrath!—But alas! How difficult a duty is this? And yet how important: How quickly does anger degenerate into malice and envy? And how often do theſe malignant paſſions break out into rage, and end in *bloodſhed* and *murder* itſelf! of what importance is it, therefore, that we ſhould keep the heart with all diligence, and cruſh and ſtifle thoſe ſeeds of

* Matth. v. 21, 22.

murder there, before they become ungovernable and *bring forth fruit unto death*? —How dangerous is an *irrascible temper*? And therefore the wise man counsels, "Make no friendship with an angry man, "and with a furious man thou shalt not "go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a "snare to thy soul.*" "From within, (says "our Saviour) out of the heart proceed evil "thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses;—these are "the things which defile a man.†" This is the source of all corruption; the fountain and origin of all the outward evils of the life, which sendeth forth iniquity, as a fountain sendeth forth its waters. Of what importance is it, therefore, to *watch over the heart*, and to have *this fountain of the life cleansed* and *purified* by grace! Were men at any pains with their *hearts*—would they look into these *chambers of imagery*, and put a stop to the workings of iniquity there;—would they give no quarter, no indulgence, to the sensual and malignant passions, but instantly *crush* and *exterminate* them as they rise in the imagination, and check the thought of wickedness, which is sin; and, while they attempt this, would they *pray for* God's *help*, and that he would create in them a clean heart, and renew a

* Prov. xxii. 24.
† Matth. xv. 18, 19, 20.

right frame of ſpirit, within them, they would have few out-breakings of ſin in their lives.—But juſt the reverſe of this is the caſe of ſinners; they not only totally neglect the government of the heart, but freely invite evil thoughts into it, and fondly cheriſh them there; ſo that their hearts are like the *sluggard's garden*, a nurſery of every poiſonous and noxious weed, and over-run with all the *sensual* and *malignant* paſſions. "Whoſoever hateſt his brother, "(ſays St. *John*) is a murderer; and ye "know that no murderer hath eternal life "abiding in him."*

2 *Avarice*, or *covetousness*, is often the cauſe of murder. "The love of money, "hath, in this reſpect, been the root of "much evil....which, while many have co-"veted after, they have erred from the "faith, and pierced themſelves through with many ſorrows.†" Many of the *wholesale murders* committed under the pretext of war....and moſt of the *private murders* committed in robberies, have ſprung from this ſource.

Ahab committed this kind of murder on *Naboth*, for his vineyard. A king covets a neighboring ſtate, and ſends his ſoldiers to murder the inhabitants, the rightful proprietors, that he may poſſeſs it: And yet

* 1 John iii. 15.
† Tim. vi. 7,—10.

this ſhall be ſanctified by the name of *a lawful war*,—and the *murderers* who fall in the attempt, ſhall be ſaid to *die in the bed of honor*; and the *chief murderer*, who ſet them on, ſhall be called a *mighty hero!* And his name ſhall ſhine in the annals of hiſtory! But that God who ſitteth on the throne of the univerſe, and is the avenger of innocent blood, ſeeth his guilt and ſhall repay it.—If the poor wretch, who, under a ſenſe of provocation, taketh away the life of his neighbor, ſhall be deemed a murderer... What ſhall we think of *Cæsar* and *Alexander*, and many other doughty *heroes* ſince their time, who have ſhed the blood of many *millions* of innocent men, merely through *avarice*, or in the wantonneſs of their *pride* and *ambition*, to acquire the fame of *mighty conquerors?*.... What ſhall we think alſo of thoſe, who, under a pretence of religion, have ſhed tons of Chriſtian blood, by *inquiſitions*, *racks*, *faggots*, and every cruel invention of perſecution, both heathen and antichriſtian?.... Is it eaſy to find a name for theſe *wholesale murderers?* But the ſouls of them who were ſlain, are crying from under the alter, "How long, O Lord, ho-"ly and true, doſt thou not judge and a-"venge our blood on them that dwell on "the earth?*" And verily God will *hear* their cry; for vengeance belongeth

* *Rev. vi. 9.*

unto him, and he will repay it! Let us therefore beware of covetouſneſs, ambition and ſuperſtition, which ſo often lead to blood-guiltineſs!

3. *Drunkenness* often *leads to, and ends* in the ſin of murder. What ſays the wiſe man? "Who hath wo? Who hath ſor-"row? Who hath contentions? Who "hath babblings? Who hath wounds with-"out cauſe? They that tarry long at the "wine; for at laſt it biteth like a *ſerpent* "and ſtingeth like an *adder*.†" "While "they are drunken as drunkards, (ſays *Na-"ham*) they ſhall be devoured as ſtubble "fully dry."...." Wine is a mocker, (ſays "*Solomon*) ſtrong drink is a raging, and "whoſoever is deceived thereby, is not "wiſe." How many unnatural quarrels; wounds without cauſe, and even murders, have been the conſequences of intoxication? And, indeed, what elſe can we expect, when the underſtandings of men are extinguiſhed, their paſſions enflamed, and their reaſon dethroned? In ſuch a ſituation as this, to what lengths of exceſs may not men go? Or what is to reſtrain them from committing the moſt atrocious crimes?....The light of reaſon *is put out*; the judgment is all *darkness* and *confuſion*; and the paſſions, like a boiſterous ſea, are all in a rage and ferment! They have no guide; no

† Prov. xxiii. 29.—32.

guard; no director! Their words and actions are all at random; and are more likely to have a bad than a good direction.

Indeed, the generality of *private murderers*, are owing more or less to this cause. Ought not this, therefore, to be better than a thousand arguments *for sobriety*, and *against drunkenness?* Can we possibly be over cautious against an excess, which *unmans us*, which deprives us of the guidance of reason, proves a *stimulus* to all the passions, and renders us the dupe of every temptation, and liable to commit the greatest and most destructive crimes?—How many thousands are there this day in the world, who have suddenly committed such crimes in their liquor, in a drunken unguarded moment, as have ruined themselves and their families, and as they never would probably have thought of in sobriety?

We have reason to thank God, indeed, that this vice is not very common amongst us. But surely we cannot guard too much against it. The

4. And last source of murder which I shall mention, is the *false notions of honor and shame*, which prevail in the world; and it is the *devil's* interest to maintain them and keep them up in the minds of men, as they contribute so largely to the peopling of his kingdom.

The *fear of shame* has drove many unhappy mothers, to commit the moſt unnatural and barbarous of all murders, upon the *fruit of their own bodies*—their ſmiling, helpleſs infants!—A dread of the imputation of cowardice, from the meaneſt and vileſt part of the human ſpecies, has driven many a man to commit murder upon his neighbor, or to expoſe himſelf to the ſame fate, againſt every dictate of reaſon, humanity, charity, and even ſelf-preſervation.

How many men deem themſelves as much in *honor* and duty bound, to take away a man's life, who, in paſſion, would *give them the lie* (when, perhaps, it was only giving them their due!)—as to perform any duty of juſtice, charity or mercy! And what is very remarkable, *these men of honor*, theſe *heroes of the point*, are often perſons of the moſt *infamous principles*, and of the moſt *insolent* and *provoking* behavior; ſo that thoſe who converſe with them, are under the ſad dilemma, either of treating them with a reſpect which they by no means deſerve; or, of being run thro' the body, for telling them a *naked*, and oftentimes *seasonable* truth!

And yet the perſon who, from Chriſtian principles, or from the principle of ſelf-preſervation, would decline this way of determining a point of honor, muſt loſe the eſ-

teem of the world, and be poſted and ſtigmatized as a *coward!*

How many murders have had their riſe from a word miſunderſtood, from an affront never deſigned, or from other punctilios ſo trifling, as not to deſerve the ſmalleſt degree of reſentment?

To conclude. Would we be removed at the greateſt poſſible diſtance from the commiſſion of this heinous and atrocious crime,

(1.) Let us labor to obtain a *ſound converſion!* Let us pray that GOD would give us a *new heart* and a *right frame of ſpirit*: that he would root out of our heart every bitter root of *malice*, *envy* and *revenge*, and that he would implant, in their ſtead, the principles of *humanity*, *mercy*, *meekness*, *patience* and *Chriſtian charity*; that we may *do juſtly*, *love mercy* and *walk humbly* with our GOD!

(2.) Let us keep a ſtrict watch and guard over our *paſſions* and *appetites*; thoſe luſts which war againſt the ſoul, and hurry it on to every ſpecies of exceſs.

And while we watch, let us *pray* that we enter not into temptation; that GOD would, by his grace, keep us from falling; and powerfully *aſſiſt* and *uphold* us in every time of need. And,

Laſtly; let us ſhun evil company, which *is often* the occaſion of theſe ſins. 'Evil

'communications corrupt good manners.'

The miſchiefs which have ariſen from evil company, and the ſnares which men have been brought into by it, are innumerable. 'Bleſſed is the man, that walketh 'not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor 'ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth 'in the ſeat of the ſcornful, (ſays *David.**) 'He that walketh with the wiſe, ſhall be 'wiſe; but a companion of fools ſhall be 'deſtroyed. My ſon, (ſays *Solomon*,) if 'ſinners entice thee, conſent thou not: walk 'not thou in the way with them: Refrain 'thy foot from their path: For their feet 'run to evil, and make haſte to ſhed blood. 'Enter not into the path of the wicked, and 'go not in the way of evil men: Avoid it, 'paſs not by it; turn from it and paſs away: 'For they ſleep not unleſs they have done 'miſchief.'

May God ſanctify theſe inſtructions of his word to us, and make them *operative on our hearts*, and *fruitful in our lives*, through the power and Spirit of Christ. Amen.

* Pſal. i.

FINIS.

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